DISSENT

EAST EUROPE

Two Poems . . . An Eyewitness in Hungary, *Peter Fryer* . . . Intellectual Trends in Poland, *L. Labedz* . . . The Problem of "National Communism," *Irving Howe*

A Look at Foreign Policy	LEWIS COSER
Heresy and Modern Culture	RICHARD CHASE
The Communist Party Convention	BERNARD ROSENBERG
Failure of the British Left	MICHAEL WALZER
The Individual and the Mass	NICOLA CHIAROMONTE
The Negroes Find Their Own Way	TRAVERS CLEMENT
On Danger of Being a Radical	J. H. WHEELER
Robert Penn Warren's "Segregation"	PAUL GOODMAN

A DEBATE

Stanley Diamond and *Ben Halpern* discuss: THE KIBBUTZ

SPRING 1957 75c

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Among Our Contributors: Readers have asked us to identify contributors even if they have appeared in the magazine some issues earlier. So, from now on, we'll try to do that:

Travers Clement, one of our editors, is an old-time socialist, co-author of a fine history of American radicalism, *Rebel America*, and a former National Secretary of the Socialist Party. . . . *L. Labedz* is a Polish scholar presently connected with the London School of Economics. . . . *Peter Fryer* is identified in the introductory note to the East European section. . . . *Stanley Diamond* is an anthropologist who spent a year and a half in participant-observation in a Kibbutz, as a fellow of the Social Science Research Council. He is now at work on a book to be called: *Zionism, Utopia and the Jew*. . . . *Ben Halpern*, who tangles with Diamond in this issue, is an editor of the *Jewish Frontier*, and a well-known intellectual spokesman for Labor Zionism. . . . *Nicola Chiaromonte*, one of the most distinguished critics of our time, will be a familiar name to readers of *Partisan Review* and the old *Politics;* he is presently living in Rome where, together with Ignazio Silone, he edits *Tempo Presente*. . . . *Paul Goodman* is familiar to all readers of literary magazines, anarchist journals, etc.; he is a co-author of the classical study of community life, *Communitas*, as well as of numerous works of fiction, criticism and social comment. . . . *Richard Chase* is a literary critic who has published books on Melville, Whitman, and Emily Dickinson. . . . *Michael Walzer* is a young writer presently living in England. . . . *Eugen Weber*, an historian living on the Pacific Coast, specializes in modern French politics. . . . *Jean Chabrun* is a French journalist who writes for *Express*. . . . *G. D. H. Cole*, the well-known socialist historian and author, sends us his communication from Oxford, England. . . . *J. H. Wheeler* teaches political science.

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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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AMONG OURSELVES

Our friends will be glad to know that as of March 1 the figure in the $6,000 DISSENT fund drive stood at only a few dollars short of the goal we had set. This means that the life of the magazine is assured through the fall of 1958. To all who contributed, our gratitude—and a request that pledges be paid promptly.

Circulation. With this issue DISSENT reaches the highest press run in its brief history—4,000 copies. We now have more subscribers than ever before, and because of a new distribution arrangement the magazine will be placed in many more outlets than before. DISSENT is now carried by all important bookstores and newsstands in the country. Still, there is room for a great deal of improvement. We've found that the best way to get new readers is not through advertisements or mailings but personal contacts. What we want most of all is selected lists of friends who might be interested in seeing a sample copy and subscribing.

Classroom. A political science teacher in a large university, and a history teacher in another, have ordered copies of the last issue because they want to use some of the articles in their classes. It's a good idea, and why don't you, if you teach, do it too?

American Issue. The summer 1957 DISSENT will be different from any other. More reportorial, less topical. Articles have been promised on such topics as: conditions of life among the Detroit auto workers; several communiqués from the suburbs; a report from the South on the "new Negro"; a portrait of new varieties of Washington bureaucrats; a description of what has been happening among New York garment workers; an account of problems faced by teachers, etc., etc. It should make fine reading.

Contributors. We have a large backlog of material, yet remain eager to receive political and sociological essays that can be printed in one or another of the forthcoming issues. This may be a good time to say that it helps if articles are typewritten with wide margins, on non-glossy paper and with a carbon (to save time in mailing to our scattered editors.) Once pieces are accepted, they will be printed sooner or later; though some authors of non-topical articles may be ruefully reflecting, "later rather than sooner."

Summer Address. Second class mail isn't forwarded. If you're going away for the summer, please be sure to send in your summer address as soon as possible. It's the only way of being sure to get your copy.

Publications. In addition to Irving Howe's book advertised in the last issue, there is being published this spring a large anthology on mass culture by Free Press, of which one editor is Bernard Rosenberg, a DISSENT editor too. The book contains a number of pieces that first appeared in our pages, including those by Guenther Anders, Murray Hausknecht and Henri Rabassière.

Selection. Friends often ask, "how did you ever print article X, especially since articles Y and Z are so good?" Curious thing is that each person chooses a different one to criticize and different ones to like. On the whole, that strikes us as a desirable state of affairs. DISSENT wants to print a wide range of opinion within the general bounds of its outlook, and often enough—it ought to be said—individual editors disagree as much with a contributor as some readers do. We simply try to print pieces of value and interest. (More modestly, we print the best things we can get.)

Dissent Forums. In a number of cities DISSENT readers are organizing discussion groups to consider political problems, talk over articles in the magazine and get to know each other. A group of this sort has been set up in the Boston area, has held its first meeting and has agreed to hold monthly discussions. A similar group is being set up in Detroit, and a first meeting will soon be called in New York City. Readers in other places who would like to organize such groups are urged to write in, and we will help them if possible. It's really a good idea, in these disorganized times, to meet face-to-face and discuss political problems in a relaxed, informal way.

And Correction. The advertisement in the last issue of Irving Howe's book, "Politics and the Novel," incorrectly stated the price. It should be $3.50, and *not* $3.00. Our apologies to Horizon Press, the publishers.

And PLEASE, give us several weeks notice of a change of address.

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PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES —A LOOK AT FOREIGN POLICY

I

Punch recently published a cartoon that shows three frightened little men storming into a launching station for guided missiles and shouting, "It's coming back!" John Foster Dulles must have had similar feelings during the last few months as his whole array of "liberation" propaganda threatened to blow up in his face.

Since the events in Poland and Hungary it has become clear that American foreign policy, far from being geared to the liberation of the satellites, is in fact committed to a tacit agreement with the Russians not to upset the unstable equilibrium that has slowly been established between the two remaining world powers. As Hans J. Morgenthau has written:

> The events of the fall of 1956 have opened up a gap between our verbal commitment to a policy of liberation and the actual policy we pursued when the opportunity, not to *initiate* liberation, but to support it after it had already been achieved, arose in Hungary... The United States, far from seeking out or creating opportunities for opening the door to liberation, has proven to be unwilling even to enter the door when a satellite nation kicks it wide open. (*Commentary*, February, 1957)

Thus, the State Department effectively stultified any effort in the U.N. to exert effective pressure on the Russians in the days when their tanks were crushing the Hungarian revolution. And it was most cautious in its statements on the Polish events till the day it became clear that the Gomulka regime would not take "rash action" against the Russians. The *Christian Science Monitor*'s special Vienna correspondent, Joseph C. Harsch, recently cabled:

> It would not be quite accurate to say that the Government of the United States supports the [Kadar] regime. There never has been any official avowal of support for it. But a policy implemented daily here in Vienna by advice sent across to the remaining patriots to refrain from another rising is, in its ultimate effect, the same thing as a policy of support. If Kadar survives and consolidates his position, his success will be due to that strange combination of Soviet power and Western acquiescence which is the inevitable result when Washington, London, and Paris prefer things as they are, no matter how bad, to things as they would be if the Hungarians were to attempt a second rising, or if the people of any other satellite country were to follow the Hungarian example. (February 6, 1957)

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Things will be less ambiguous now that the "liberation" propaganda has finally been exposed as the sham it was. And this unmasking of ideological pretenses seems to me not at all unwelcome. Crusades always tend to have catastrophic consequences, but worst of all crusades with a synthetic cross. The professional cold war propagandists may now be in for some technological unemployment. If recent events will lead to some reduction-in-force at the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, so much the better.

Yet the "new realism" in discarding talk of "liberation" does not amount to a new policy. It merely leaves the weakness of the old *status quo* policy all the more exposed. One might therefore ask whether a possible basis for a genuinely new departure has not begun to emerge in the recent period. And in this connection a glance at the Russian position in Europe should be useful.

ALTHOUGH order appears to have been reestablished in eastern Europe, it would be foolish to discount the profound impression that the Hungarian and Polish events must have made upon the Kremlin. In fact it would seem probable that the Hungarian and Polish trauma has led the Russians to rethink the premises of their previous policy. No matter what immediate strategy they may have decided upon, it must have become apparent to them that the satellites, far from being springboards for further advance toward the West, are in fact exposed pathways to the East. Not only cannot the Kremlin rely on the armed forces of the satellites; it needs a significant number of Russian divisions simply to keep these satellites in check. If ten Soviet divisions were needed to crush the 9 million people of Hungary, how many of the 27 divisions in East Germany, with its population of 17 million, would be required to stamp out a rebellion there? It must now have become apparent to the Kremlin that militarily they are in a far more vulnerable position in Europe than they had supposed. In fact, as Alvin Cottrell and Walter F. Hahn have argued in a brilliant article in the *New Leader* for January 21, 1957, "The Red Army cannot withdraw unilaterally without losing face [in East Germany] . . . On the other hand, it cannot remain there indefinitely without committing the cardinal military sin of overextension."

But the Russian difficulties in East Europe are not simply military. Even temporarily to stabilize its relations with the satellite regimes, the Kremlin would have to extend them considerable economic aid. This means not only to help secure regimes which, as in Yugoslavia and Poland, it seriously distrusts but also to make distinct economic sacrifices involving a strain on the Russian economy.

That there are already serious economic difficulties in Russia was revealed the other day when the new Soviet economic boss Peruvkhin declared that planned economic goals had been drastically pared down for the current year and that as against an eleven per cent gain in industrial output last year, a gain of only seven per cent is projected for this year. If the Soviet Union were now forced substantially to increase its economic aid to the satellites on top of a slowdown in economic growth at home, might not the Russian planners conclude that the danger of economic extension has become as real

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as that of military overextension? During the past decade the Russians exploited the satellites in order to increase their rate of accumulation; now it would seem as if they might have to reduce their rate of accumulation simply to keep the satellites in hand.

THE POLITICAL difficulties that beset the Russians in regard to the satellites have already been discussed in these pages. What needs to be stressed here is that in *every* sphere the Russians are faced with the dangers of overextension, so that for the first time in many years they might regard the continuation of their rule in East Europe as a serious liability.

It is this possibility that offers new openings for American foreign policy. Some recent Russian proposals might even provide the United States with opportunities for initiating such a new policy. The Russian disarmament scheme announced on November 17, 1956, in the midst of the Hungarian and Middle East crisis, has not yet received adequate attention. Central to this scheme were the following items: 1) the reduction by one-third of the armed forces of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France in Germany; 2) a considerable reduction of Russian, American, French and English troops in NATO and Warsaw Pact territories; 3) the establishment of an aerial inspection system reaching roughly 500 miles in depth from the borders between West and East Germany.

These proposals were received in Washington with the usual scepticism and considered simply new moves in the propaganda war. But in view of the Russian situation in East Europe, may one not at least entertain the idea that they are meant to be taken much more seriously? May not these proposals be considered as feelers raising the possibility that the Russians can be induced to accept a staged withdrawal of Russian and U.S. troops to a region roughly 500 miles from the east-west border of Germany?

This would put the Russians back to the borders of the Soviet Union and would mean a withdrawal of American forces behind the Channel coast and the Spanish border. It would eventually mean the establishment within Europe of a wide neutral belt including the satellites as well as a united Germany. The problems created by such withdrawals are tremendously complex, yet in view of the present difficulties of the Russians the possibility of such a policy can no longer be considered utopian.

It has been a traditional tenet of socialist politics to oppose any military or political domination of one nation by another, to oppose any imposition of the will of imperialist nations upon dependent areas. The demand for the withdrawal of Russian as well as American troops from continental Europe is thus clearly in accord with socialist tradition. But we now enter a period where this old socialist demand seems to coincide with immediate realistic possibilities. Such a neutralization of Germany and the satellite states would mean that the USSR would be freed from its perennial fear of a renewed German aggression backed by NATO. On the other hand Russia would, in exchange for guarantees of its security, renounce its dominion over the satellites—without "losing face."

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Here would seem to lie tremendous possibilities for an imaginative policy by European socialists. But American foreign policy is also presented with new opportunities. One may doubt that the ineffable Dulles is capable of utilizing them, or even that more than a very few Senate Democrats are capable of pushing in this direction. And yet it now is at least conceivable that Washington and Moscow, moved purely by power considerations, might achieve a *modus vivendi* which would allow the emergence of new political forces in a Europe at least partly free from Russian and American military pressures. Such a Europe could very well be socialist in its economy and democratic in its political structure. Neither Russia nor America would feel at all sympathetic to it, yet precisely their mutual antagonism might make it possible.

II

"With the withdrawal from Port Said," writes G. F. Hudson in the London *Twentieth Century* (January 1957), "Britain ceases to be a great power in the Middle East, but by the same event America has become the heir to all the troubles of the world between Bab el Mandeb and Kirkuk. Every *djinn* of the Thousand and One Nights has now gone to make its home in Washington. The Americans have been victorious and they must bear the consequences of that, too." Mr. Hudson seems to imply that *some* imperialist power need always bear the White Man's burden and that, since Britain has dropped it, America must necessarily pick it up. That is nonsense. But his immediate description of the situation is exact. Every *djinn* of the Middle East is now haunting Mr. Dulles, and as a result he seems to have become more bewildered than ever.

During the Suez crisis America adopted the stance of the "only moral nation," the staunch champion of national self-determination, peaceful solution of disputes, etc. By opposing the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt, America seemed purged of the accusation of supporting colonialism. Vice President Nixon, always sensitive to a good pitch (also known in the trade as a "soft sell") rushed in to declare that "The United States has met the test of history... The rule of law has been upheld—the same law for the powerful and strong as for the weak and defenseless... The peoples of Asia and Africa know now that we walk with them as moral equals..." Magnificent sentiments; but apart from those cynics who would raise the spectre of Hungary, one can readily imagine an Indian who might be pardoned a certain reserve in regard to Mr. Nixon's eloquence after hearing that the United States has just lined up with Mollet in his "pacification" of Algeria.

Still, for a few weeks during the Suez crisis the United States did find itself in a somewhat unusual position, so much so that writers like Reinhold Niebuhr began to express fears that Americans might succumb to the un-Christian plague of "national pacifism." But things have been righted, and the State Department is back to its old stand. As if drawn by an inherent tropism, American policy is again engaged in shoring up the most reactionary forces in the Middle East. American foreign policy seems constitutionally unable

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to deal with, or even take into account, any of the political elements in the Middle East that might conceivably represent trends of the future; it instinctively turns to the most corrupt Arab rulers. Ibn Saud must surely have been privately amused at some of the speeches made in Washington praising the Saudi Arabian nation—for *he* knows that he does not represent a nation but merely exploits a territory and its subsoil.

The whole frantic activity of the State Department in recent weeks is allegedly legitimized by reference to the dangers of imminent Russian intervention. The West, so the argument runs, needs Middle Eastern oil, which is a life-blood for West European economies—and the American oil companies. We cannot afford to lose it to the Russians. But is there any real danger of the Russians actually moving into the Middle East in the immediate future?

Certain vital facts need to be recalled here. First, that thanks to the exploitation of the "Second Baku" fields in the Urals, Soviet oil production has been rising rapidly, reaching 83 million tons last year. Russia is not in immediate need of oil. Its aim has been not so much to gain control over Middle Eastern oil, but rather to foster antagonism to the West among the Arab countries, so as to make Western access to this oil more difficult. Second, Russian arms have indeed been shipped to Egypt and Syria, but it is most doubtful that these were ever intended to lead to the creation of "Popular Democracies." Russian aims were best suited not by a war that might settle matters once and for all, but by an increase in Middle Eastern tension and instability.

In the meantime, however, Russia, in its efforts to counter the "Eisenhower doctrine," has come up with a significant new proposal, made public by Dimitri Shepilov on February 12. This six point program proposes: noninterference in the internal affairs of the Middle East by East and West alike, elimination of all foreign bases, *agreement not to deliver arms to the countries of the Middle East,* rejection of attempts to involve these countries in military blocs and economic aid "without any political, military and other conditions." It is the point that we have italicized which is most important and, again, offers new possibilities for foreign policy. Washington immediately responded by calling the Russian plan "propaganda," which in one sense it no doubt is; yet there is every reason for not merely dismissing it. The Russians are in trouble at home, they do not immediately need oil, they seem to lack the resources for any large scale aid to the underdeveloped countries at the moment—note their thunderous silence, as the London *Economist* recently called it, on the Aswan dam project. Hence, it would appear that for the time being the Russians are considerably more interested in keeping the Americans out of the Middle East than in themselves directly moving in. If they cannot achieve this aim by constantly fanning the tensions and conflicts within the social and political arena, they may well be ready to settle for some sort of neutralization of the Middle East.

Now such neutralization will clearly not be desirable for Pentagon planners in search of new military bases, nor for oil interests in search of further guarantees for the secure exploitation of Arabia's and Persia's fabulous re-

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sources. Yet might not such neutralization be in the long-run interests of America? Here would be an occasion to compete with the Russians peacefully, that is, not in terms of tanks and bombers but with irrigation schemes and agricultural improvements. An International Development scheme for the Middle East in which America would inevitably assume a major role would in a relatively short time have revolutionary consequences for the whole economic, social and political structure of the Arab countries. It would liberate tremendous social and cultural forces now suppressed by the Arab rulers. It might allow the Arab countries to jump from the 15th to the 20th century. The medieval *djinns* now haunting Mr. Dulles might be replaced by modern ones.

That the present Washington elite will act along the lines here suggested, is most unlikely. Experience and observation suggest that they will take the opposite course. But is it really asking too much of the liberals, the ADA and the labor movement to fight hard for such a program, in opposition to the "Eisenhower doctrine" for the Middle East? It would mean buying time, relaxing the tensions that threaten the peace of the world, giving some of the peoples in central Europe and the Middle East a chance to shape their own lives.

March 1, 1957

LEWIS COSER

The struggle for freedom in eastern Europe remains one of the most stirring facts of our time. In the following section we print reports and analyses of these great events, continuing the discussion begun in earlier issues of DISSENT. *The poems, taken from the Polish writers' newspaper, show how deeply the Hungarian revolution affected the intellectuals of Poland. The article by L. Labedz provides background material on the Polish situation, and is printed here by arrangement with* Soviet Survey. *Peter Fryer's report on the Hungarian revolution is one of the most valuable first-hand accounts of that great event, particularly in that it communicates a sense of the democratic nature of the revolution without blinking the violence that so frequently accompanies the outburst of long-repressed popular sentiments. Mr. Fryer was the Budapest correspondent of the London* Daily Worker *but broke from the paper when it failed to print his dispatches. Considering his political predispositions, his testimony is particularly valuable. The final article, by one of our editors, initiates a discussion of the problem of "National Communism."*

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RELEASE

Mieczyslaw Jastrun

Five years he was locked in a cell
Under sentence of death.

During those years
Daily the sun traced its arc
The stars revolved
Slum houses reeked of alcohol
Music poured from radios
Into crowded streets
Chatter: "Marx Engels Justice..."
Chatter: "His Holiness has said..."
Chatter: "Movies Care packages Jesus Mary Mother of God..."

During those years
Each night he was wakened
Blinded by flashlights
Doused with icy water
His fingers were broken
Until his body was weightless, transparent,
So you could see his ghost
Curled there like an embryo in a womb

Suddenly, an unknown guard
Who had the features of his wife
And the eyes of his son (both died while was in prison)
Flung open his door.
He heard the blast of trumpets. He saw the angels of Sodom.

Nowa Kultura, Oct. 28, 1956

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QUI TACENT CLAMANT

Adam Wazyk

I was with you before the monument of Bem
When you raised high the flags of Hungary and Poland.
I do not know who of you is wounded, who is dead
Now that your voices are silent, and the fires ablaze.

In Poland's hour of trouble, Tibor Dery,
You telephoned to ask if I was safe.
I heard your voice again from Parliament Building
Cut short as it broadcast a last appeal for help.

We were the conscience of history. Now we are silent,
For "reasons of state" we must hold our tongues.
In the acrid smoke creeping over the fallen rebels
This last myth has collapsed. There remains the monument of Bem.

Nowa Kultura, Nov. 25, 1956

Translated by NORBERT GUTERMAN

N.B. *On Oct. 25, the day the uprising began in Budapest, a group of Hungarian rebels deposited a wreath at the foot of the monument of Jozef Bem, a Polish general who in 1849 offered his services to Kossuth and distinguished himself by his brilliantly conducted campaign against the Russian interventionist forces.*
Tibor Dery is a young Hungarian writer, leader in the fight against "intellectual bureaucracy," elected member of the executive of the Hungarian Writers' Union in September 1956.

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AN EYEWITNESS IN HUNGARY*

Peter Fryer

Half-way through the morning the barrier was lifted and a car came through and drew up in front of the customs house. Inside were German Red Cross men and a German journalist. The car was full of food and medical supplies; something had happened at the town of Magyaróvár, ten minutes drive along the main road to Gyor. They did not know what, but it was reported that many were wounded. They intended to leave the supplies at Magyaróvár and then try to get through to Budapest to see what was needed there. I begged for a place in the car and they agreed to squeeze up and take me. Soon we were speeding through the Kis Alföld, Hungary's Little Plain, a countryside of harvested fields as monotonously flat as my native Holderness, and that was the only comforting feature of this plunge into the unknown. In Hegyeshalom village, a few minutes away, adults stared at our car and children waved. But there were not many people about. In Magyaróvár the streets were packed, and the car was at once surrounded by people who tried to talk to us in German, English and French.

There was an air of tremendous tension in the town as if some terrible natural calamity had taken place. It was a feeling such as hangs over a British mining town when a pit disaster draws crowds to the pit-head. Some women were crying. No one smiled. From the disjointed phrases, we learned that a demonstration had been fired on the previous day by men of the secret police. There were eighty dead and between one hundred and two wounded. We must see the bodies of those who had been murdered. But first would we go to the revolutionary committee, which was in session at the Town Hall?

The Hungarian tricolor and the black flag of mourning flew side by side from almost every house. In everyone's button-hole there was a scrap of red, white and green ribbon and, pinned with it, a scrap of black ribbon.

The revolutionary committee received us with great courtesy. It

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* This article constitutes Chapter II of *Hungarian Tragedy*, a first-hand report of the Hungarian Revolution by Peter Fryer, at the time the Budapest correspondent of the London *Daily Worker*. *Hungarian Revolution* appeared in England under the imprint of Dennis Dobson Books, Ltd., which holds copyright and with whose permission this chapter receives its first American publication in DISSENT.

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had been set up after the events of the previous day, and was in continuous session, mainly organizing food supplies and arranging contact with the similar committee at Gyor, the county town. The twenty members of the revolutionary committee were all local men; none could be called an *émigré*. Some were Communists, but rank-and-file Communists, not officials. What happened to the officials? "The party secretary was a bully, but he was not a criminal. We told him to go home and stay there for a bit."

Most of the committee members were former members of the Social-Democratic Party, who for one reason or another had dropped out of political activity since the Communist Party and the Social-Democratic Party were merged in the Hungarian Working People's Party in June 1948. Magyaróvár, its population of 22,000 almost entirely working-class, had elected a town council with a Socialist majority in 1945. But after the merger of the two parties the people's own creative initiative, their desire to build Socialism, was stifled. They were neither consulted nor drawn into the administration of their own affairs. The Party bosses ran the town by issuing orders. There was no feeling that the town and its factories belonged to the people, or that the Party was an organization of the people, despite all the propaganda about Socialism. "Entrance allowed only on official business," said a notice at the Party headquarters. Where could the people turn in their poverty? The trade unions were a farce—dominated by Party puppets, and existing not to protect and improve the wages and conditions of their members but to "mobilize" them in the struggle for higher production. They were no longer an instrument of the working people but an instrument of the State. Magyaróvár was a poor town, its poverty made no more bearable by the veneer of Socialism: the red star, the slogans, the portraits of Lenin, Stalin and Rákosi (until recently), the expression *elvtárs* [comrade], and the compulsory May Day demonstrations. The people had been promised a better life, and were prepared to cooperate to the full to achieve it. But life grew worse instead of better. The townfolk knew from personal experience that the propaganda in *Szabad Nép* and on the wireless was so much hypocrisy.

This was the story the revolutionary committee told me, and the old Socialists among them, men who remembered what it had been like before the war, were the most vehement and passionate in their denunciation of the "Socialism" that had been foisted upon their fellow-citizens in the past eight years. "It has been eight years of hell," they said.

They began to speak of the preceding day's events. On Wednesday and Thursday the word had spread round the factories and streets of the fighting in Budapest. By Friday the whole town was in ferment, and at about 10 o'clock in the morning the people poured out of their

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houses in a spontaneous demonstration. They were unarmed, and at that stage they did not want arms. Their only weapons were red, white and green flags, and occasional rough posters bearing the two fundamental demands of the national uprising: "End the Russian occupation" and "Abolish the A.V.H." There were 5,000 people in the demonstration, including old men and old women, young girls from the aluminum factory, women with their babies in their arms and schoolboys. Singing the Hungarian National Anthem, they marched through their town in the first spontaneous demonstration since 1945. They were entirely peaceful—except that wherever they saw a red star they tore it down. This was not an expression of their desire for the restoration of capitalism. It expressed their desire for an end of Soviet occupation, for the removal of the Soviet symbols that had been thrust down their throats in place of bread, for the silencing of the empty slogans that had been dinned into their ears in place of truth.

The crowd, a good-humored one, drew near the A.V.H. headquarters where a huge red star stood out against the sky. "Take down the red star," they roared.

The reply was a hoarse word of command, the rattle of machine-gun fire, the mowing down of those in the front ranks; then the screams of the wounded.

No warning was given, no Riot Act was read, for Hungary does not have a Riot Act. There was not even an initial burst of firing into the air, or over the people's heads. At the command of A.V.H. Lieutenant József Stefko, two machine-guns hidden behind the windows of the headquarters pumped bullets into the thickest part of the crowd. A.V.H. men also threw hand-grenades. The firing went on for four minutes, and some of those wounded were shot again in the back as they tried to crawl away. Men and women, students and workers, children and even an 18-month-old baby were among the victims.

Nothing could now restrain the crowd, and they rushed to the army barracks to pour out the story to the soldiers. Without hesitation the soldiers broke open the armory and gave the people weapons. There was a fierce battle for the A.V.H. headquarters, in the course of which one of the detachment's four officers was killed. Another was captured and lynched and the other two were wounded and taken to the hospital. One of these had died during the night, and the other, Lieutenant Stefko, was still lying there; a crowd had gathered outside the hospital and was demanding that he be handed over to them for summary justice.

When we had listened to this story, the revolutionary committee insisted that the German and English journalists go out on the balcony and address the crowds, and then visit the cemetery to see for themselves the victims of the atrocity. Interpreters were provided, and we faced a crowd of several hundreds: soldiers, workers, students and wom-

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en. The German said simply that medical help was on the way from West Germany. I did not know what to say; my heart was too full to do more than tell the people that the British people had not yet any reliable news of what was happening in Hungary, that I would make it my business to tell them as speedily as possible, and that I was sure that as soon as the news spread medical aid would be on its way from Britain, too. I have tried to keep the promise to tell the truth I made that day as the black flag hanging from the Town Hall balcony flapped in my face and the faces of people stricken by a grief beyond words merged into a blur in my eyes. I should be interested to know what J. R. Campbell, editor of the [London] *Daily Worker,* or Mick Bennett, assistant editor, or George Matthews, assistant secretary of the Communist Party, who suppressed the dispatch I wrote about Magyaróvár, would have said to the people of that town if they had been in my place. Would they have insulted their grief with warnings about "counter-revolution," or delivered a little homily about "White Terror"? Would they have addressed them in the lofty, omniscient tones of the *Daily Worker* editorial of the day before, the day this abominable mass murder took place:

> What has happened in Hungary during these past days has not been a popular uprising against a dictatorial Government. It has been an organized and planned effort to overthrow by undemocratic and violent means a Government which was in process of carrying through important constructive measures.

And when they were taken to see the dead, as I then was, how would they have described them? As fascists? Reactionaries? Counter-revolutionaries? I should like to know.

They took us in slow, silent procession along an avenue of plane trees to the little chapel and mortuary in the town cemetery. Hundreds went with us; we passed many more coming away, having identified kinsfolk or sweethearts or friends, or having stood in homage to dead workmates or fellow-students. Some faces were set and stern, others were contorted with weeping, and I wept myself when we reached the chapel and the mortuary. The mourners made way for us and gently pushed us to the very front, so that we should see and know and tell what we had seen. The bodies lay in rows; the dried blood was still on the clothing. Some had little bunches of flowers on their breasts. There were girls who could not have been more than sixteen. There was a boy of six or so. Already in a coffin, lightly shrouded, lay the corpse of the eighteen-month-old baby. After eleven years of "people's democracy" it had come to this: that the security police was so remote from the people, so alien to them, so vicious and so brutal that it turned its weapons on a defenseless crowd and murdered the people who were supposed to be masters of their own country.

I did not want to hear any more or see any more. But I was

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forced to. For several hours I stood at the entrance to the cemetery, hemmed in by a gigantic crowd, a succession of interpreters coming forward to translate through English or French. I must have spoken to well over a hundred people that day alone. All were obviously working-class people. All told more or less the same story. I made a point of questioning every one who claimed to be an eyewitness of the atrocity. I did not want to believe what they told me, but their stories tallied in every important detail. In particular, I sought to make absolutely sure that the demonstrators did not carry arms, and that the arms they ultimately obtained were given them by the soldiers. The answers I received to these points carried complete conviction.

But the crowds spoke also to me of their lives in this small industrial town, of the long years of grinding poverty, without hope of improvement, of their hatred and fear of the A.V.H. "I get 700 forints a month," said one. "I only get 600," said another.* They were ill-dressed, the women and girls doing their pathetic best to achieve some faint echo of elegance. They spoke to me about the A.V.H. "They were beasts, brutes, animals who had sold themselves to the Russians." "They called themselves Hungarians and they mowed our people down without hesitation!" "We shan't leave a single one of those swine alive —you'll see." They asked me what the West was doing to help, and some asked outright for arms. I for one do not regard these as counter-revolutionaries. If after eleven years the working people, goaded beyond bearing, look to the West for succor, whose fault is that? If the Americans are guilty of seeking to foster counter-revolution with the Mutual Security Act, surely the Rákosis and the Gerös are a hundred times more guilty for providing the soil in which seeds sown by Americans could grow.

There was a general movement in the direction of the hospital, where an immense crowd had gathered, clamoring for Stefko to be brought out to them. The German journalist and I were admitted into the hospital, where we met the director's wife and a French-speaking woman who had volunteered to help with the nursing. It was here that I got for the first time reasonably accurate figures of the number of wounded. There had been about 80 wounded brought here, of whom eleven had died, and about 80 had been taken to the hospital at Györ. The need for plasma and other medicaments was desperate if lives were to be saved and so was the need, said the director's wife, to end the tumult outside. A deputation from the revolutionary committee was interviewing her husband to demand that Stefko be handed to the people.

A few minutes later the director was forced to give in, and we

* At the official rate of exchange, 600 forints is worth about £18, at the tourist rate rate of exchange £9. The purchasing power is probably about £12-£14, but it should be remembered that rents are generally speaking lower in Hungary than in Britain, while clothing, quality for quality, is much dearer. The average wage in Hungary before the revolution was between 900 and 1,000 forints a month—say £25.

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saw a stretcher carried by four men appear out of a hut in the hospital grounds. On it lay Stefko, wearing a blue shirt. His legs were covered by a blanket. His head was bandaged. He was carried close enough to me for me to have touched him. He was fully conscious, and he knew quite well what was going to happen to him. His head turned wildly from side to side and there was spittle round his mouth. As the crowd saw the stretcher approaching they sent up a howl of derision and anger and hatred. They climbed the wire fence and spat at him and shouted "murderer." They pushed with all their might at the double gates, burst them open and surged in. The stretcher was flung to the ground, and the crowd was upon Stefko, kicking and trampling. Relations of those he had murdered were, they told me, foremost in this lynching. It was soon over. They took the body and hanged it by the ankles for a short time from one of the trees in the Lenin Street. Ten minutes afterwards only a few people were left outside the hospital.

I wrote later in my first, unpublished, dispatch:

> After eleven years the incessant mistakes of the Communist leaders, the brutality of the State Security Police, the widespread bureaucracy and mismanagement, the bungling, the arbitrary methods and the lies have led to a total collapse. This was no counter-revolution, organized by fascists and reactionaries. It was the upsurge of a whole people, in which rank-and-file Communists took part, against a police dictatorship dressed up as a Socialist society—a police dictatorship backed up by Soviet armed might.
>
> I am the first Communist journalist from abroad to visit Hungary since the revolution started. And I have no hesitation in placing the blame for these terrible events squarely on the shoulders of those who led the Hungarian Communist Party for eleven years—up to and including Erno Gero. They turned what could have been the outstanding example of people's democracy in Europe into a grisly caricature of Socialism. They reared and trained a secret police which tortured all —Communists as well as non-Communists—who dared to open their mouths against injustices. It was a secret police which in the last few dreadful days turned its guns on the people whose defenders it was supposed to be.

I wrote this under the immediate impact of a most disturbing and shattering experience, but I do not withdraw one word of it. Much of the rest of the dispatch was never received in London because the call was cut off after twenty minutes, and the first ten had been taken up by three different people giving me contradictory instructions as to the "line" I should take. Mick Bennett insisted on reading me a long extract from a resolution of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. I had had enough of resolutions. I had seen where eleven years of terror and stupidity had led Hungary, and I wanted to tell the readers

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of the *Daily Worker* the plain unvarnished truth, however painful it might be. But the readers of the *Daily Worker* were not to be told the truth. The day after I had sent this dispatch they were reading only about "gangs of reactionaries" who were "beating Communists to death in the streets" of Budapest. The paper admitted in passing that "some reports claimed that only identified representatives of the former security police were being killed." Next day Hungary disappeared altogether from the *Daily Worker's* front page.

For many years I had opposed, in what I wrote and said, and in my heart, the crimes of British imperialism in the Colonies. At Magyaróvár on October 27 I vowed that in the future I would oppose with equal passion and energy crimes committed by those who called themselves Communists, crimes which besmirched a noble and humanitarian cause.

INTELLECTUAL TRENDS IN POLAND

L. Labedz

I

When doctrinal doubts begin to arise, Communist intellectuals frequently tend to revise more than the political framework of their system of beliefs. This tendency has been evident in the case of Poland, a country with an ancient and powerful European culture-consciousness, reinforced by national resentment and politico-economic revulsion against the established system which also embodied the established doctrine. For many of the younger intellectuals already educated in the Party spirit, the outcome is likely to be a crisis of faith. Even if one abstracts from such cases, it is already apparent that the new phenomenon we are dealing with cannot be adequately described as "Polish Titoism." The Titoist doctrine was a *post hoc* rationalization on the part of the excommunicated leaders, an ideology made to measure and constantly refashioned to suit a changing political situation. In Poland by contrast, the "revisionists" tried to bring about a change and have in many instances gone further than the ex-Titoist heretic, Djilas, though they have so far refrained from publicly expressing doubts about the monopolistic position of the Party in the political sphere.

The movement started as a protest against the strangulation of cultural activities, and more generally against excessive interference by the Party in non-political fields. Along with this there went the fundamentalist critique of "mistaken interpretations" of revealed truth

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which frequently accompanies a revolt against orthodoxy and the corresponding call for a "return" to the essentials of the true faith. Such elements were noticeable in the flood of criticism which erupted, but the more sophisticated spokesmen of the Communist intelligentsia did not rest content with simple fundamentalism. It was not long before the ghosts of Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg, of Bukharin and Trotsky, stalked the scene. More than once were these historic figures mentioned by name, although to the younger generation their writings may be little known. But their attitudes inspired some of the more striking formulations put forward by the critics . . . Certain statements . . . came perilously close to disbelief in the essentials of doctrine.

Although this revisionist current was invariably qualified by references to Marx, and presented as a "return to Leninism," in terms appropriate since the XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, it soon overflowed the banks. The chief political weapon used in the struggle was not the clumsy ideological jugglery of Khrushchev's opening address to the Congress, but his "secret" report on Stalin.

At the ideological level, confusion reigned, with reformist and revolutionary attitudes simultaneously professed by the critics of orthodoxy, who in some cases seem not to have realized that they were putting forward incompatible ideas. Other writers seem to have been in doubt —official assurances notwithstanding—whether Marxism was still relevant to all the topics under discussion. While their proclaimed aim was to bring it up to date, they appeared in fact more interested in getting it out of the way.

Some of the old taboos, which still remained in force, had an obviously hampering effect on the discussions, as did the prolonged isolation from the West. Yet the political significance of the whole debate on fundamentals is apparent now. Ideology can serve as a cover for political aims—consciously or otherwise. The line between "false consciousness" and false pretenses or between honest doubt and deliberate camouflage is not in all cases easy to draw. But in the case of the more youthful participants at least there seems to have been a genuine outburst of long-suppressed feelings and thoughts; what was a matter of cynical readjustment for aged careerists was plainly an overflow of conscience for many of the young . . .

It was mainly the young who tended to fall back on fundamentalism, stressing the revolutionary aspects of Leninism, reviving memories of the Spanish civil war,* and appealing for a "pure" form of proletarian dictatorship, *i.e.* one free from bureaucratic domination. Yet though there was much talk of standing for the interests of the workers against the bureaucracy, the debate was essentially over culture . . .

* One of its survivors, recalling the Stalinist liquidation of rivals in Republican Spain, raised the question of whether the 1937 "putsch" in Barcelona 'was needed by the organizers of the Moscow trials' (J. Waka, "Spanish and Polish Affairs," *Poprostu*, No. 43, October 21, 1956).

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II

The first writer to put forward a boldly revisionist thesis was the distinguished sociologist J. Chalasinski. Writing in the columns of *Nauka Polska,* he advanced the daring thesis that a supporter of historical materialism is not necessarily bound to accept uncritically every assertion made by the founders of Marxism. He also suggested that values cannot be deduced either from the physical sciences or from Marxism. Although rebuked by the *Literary Journal,* he went on to criticize the part played by Marxist orthodoxy in the humanities during the past decade. Deploring its fruits, he pointed to the prevalence of an enforced unanimity, an impersonal style, moral emptiness combined with megalomania, and a general absence of real achievements. According to another writer "at present, under socialism, we have retrogressed in the domain of scientific enquiry on social problems even in comparison with the inter-war period" (*Przeglad Zagadnien Socjalnych,* July, 1956). The fault lay in the monopoly accorded to Marxism-Leninism, the absence of freedom, and the consequent lack of genuine discussion (J. Chalasinski, "Problems of Contemporary Culture in Polish Humanities," *Nauka Polska,* No. 2, 1955).

This scarcely veiled assault on the Party's monopoly in the intellectual field set the ball of criticism rolling. Chalasinski's attack on "partiinost" in science gave the signal for similar utterances in the literary field and in other intellectual domains. Hitherto repressed critical attitudes began to find their way to the surface and were voiced with growing intensity. Among the more striking was an article by another sociologist, St. Ossovski, on the development of individual creativity (*Przeglad Kulturalny,* No. 13, 1956) which the orthodox can hardly have relished.

From attacks on Stalinist practice, the movement of criticism spread to criticism of Marxist theory. The Party's monopoly of intellectual control was now questioned in the light of its sorry achievements in the cultural field, and this led to the question how far Marxism could be held responsible for what even the orthodox had to admit was an unsatisfactory state of affairs. This in turn raised the problem of what, in technical terms, should perhaps be called the Engels-Plekhanov version of Marxist epistemology, and from there the critics advanced, albeit with due caution, to the premises of Marxist theory as such. The debate thus imperceptibly involved the fundamentals of doctrine, and even the official propagandists were compelled to retreat from previously maintained positions. One of the most important among them, the Party philosopher A. Schaff, began by defending the "unambiguousness of Marxian ideology," the class character of the criteria of truth, the class conditioning of cultural phenomena, and the consequent need for "full domination of Marxism" through Party control of the physical and social sciences; at the same time he urged scientists to seek the truth, without troubling to explain how this was to be done

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if the two desiderata should come into conflict. Yet he conceded some points to his opponents, and even delivered an attack on the "cult of the individual" and its harmful consequences three months before Khrushchev's report to the XXth Congress, thus causing a minor sensation. Having thus replaced the infallible leader by the infallible party, he later (after the XXth Congress) went so far as to state that no institution could be considered infallible (*Nowe Drogi,* No. 4, 1956).

There were other attemps to halt the revisionist wave. Zolkievski, the Minister of Culture (since replaced), while conceding some of the critics' charges, reminded them that the abolition of the "cult of the individual" did not imply a retreat from Marxism-Leninism, or the abandoning by the Party of its controlling position in the arts and sciences (*Nowe Drogi,* No. 12, 1955). These heretical demands were likewise censured in the theoretical organ of the Party by H. Eilstein, who insisted that "the fight against dogmatism cannot become a fight for the acceptance ... of revisionism and eclectic compromises on the fundamental questions" (*ibid.,* No. 2, 1956).

These attempts to throw up a dyke against the "thaw" suffered a drastic blow when the Khrushchev report on Stalin reached Poland. Whereas in the U.S.S.R. its full text was not very widely divulged, in Poland it was circulated in printed form to every party cell in the country by the Central Committee itself—apparently in order to forestall its disclosure by Western broadcasts, which are widely listened to. The effect was shattering. It now became impossible to limit the scope of criticism to the official framework. Captive minds began to sprout heretical thoughts, using the prescribed jargon in the interest of genuine criticism. Dubious or risky pronouncements were boldly put forward in the guise of attempts to carry out the decisions of the XXth Congress. The movement snowballed into a general assault on orthodoxy, far beyond the previous borders of licensed criticism. Here and there attempts were made to condemn the "hysterical petty-bourgeois elements," but they proved unavailing. By imperceptible gradations, some of the hitherto terrorized "engineers of the soul" recovered some of their liberty to think, and even admitted that they had previously been outraging their own consciences.

III

The lead was taken by the student youth, whose weekly journal, *Poprostu,* transformed itself in September, 1956, into the organ of the critical elements among the intelligentsia. Its courageous stand soon won it enormous popularity, its circulation reaching the astonishing figures of one hundred and fifty thousand copies which were sold within the hour of publication. At the same time, debating clubs—the equivalents of the Petöfi and Kossuth circles in Hungary—sprang up and rapidly became a vehicle for the voicing of public complaints.

This intellectual ferment had a notable effect on the still continuing

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academic debate between orthodox defenders of the faith and their revisionist critics. On behalf of the former, A. Schaff fell back on a new line of defence. He was now found ready to condemn "authoritarian solutions of scientific problems, on the basis of one's position in the hierarchy" (*Nowe Drogi*, No. 6, 1956), although he hedged by insisting that nothing should be done to "undermine the domination of Marxist methodology in science." But this was mere face-saving. The revisionists were emerging as the victors in the debate which now entered upon a fresh phase...

The new ritual was not spared. The bolder critics now referred to "the so-called cult of the individual," *i.e.* they went beyond the terms licensed by the XXth Congress. *Poprostu* openly pointed to the new distinguishing mark: "The writers are divided into those who discuss errors and distortions, and those who discuss so-called errors and distortions." The latter now make more frequent use of the term: "Stalinism." (*Poprostu*, No. 43, October 21, 1956. R. Zimand: "The Controversy on the Future of Socialism.")

Circumlocutions were sometimes abandoned, notably by the younger writers, who often began to call a spade a spade, in doctrinal as well as political matters. Embarrassing questions were asked (cf. *Poprostu*, June 24, 1956. W. Godek and R. Turki: "Is this the decline of Marxism?") Surprise was expressed that Marxism is described "as a flourishing and universal theory" despite the fact "that for many years years (it) has turned somersaults in one and the same place; that Marxist sociology has nothing to say on the most crucial problems; that Marxist ethics has remained until today where Marx left off and Marxist aesthetics does not exist at all..." (J. Szacki, "Some remarks on the history of Marxism," *Poprostu*, No. 43, October 21, 1956). Even the Marxist notion of historical progress towards socialism did not escape derision. Its teleological assumptions were questioned. "History has to be tortured in order that it should give birth to the next formation as quickly as possible... (But) is it really worth while paying any price to history so that it should run quicker?" The answer is emphatically negative. "We demand responsibility to the present, and not to history." These formulations by one of the critics (Y. Kott, *Przeglad Kulturalny*, No. 37 [211], September 13-19, 1956) give rise to the awkward question: "What is that constitutes the superiority of one road to socialism over another? The fact that it is more rapid? No, the fact that it is socially cheaper" (*ibid.*). And thus the twin pillars of Stalinism, political terror and forcible accumulation of capital, fall under critical, if indirect, scrutiny: "It is high time to apply Marxism to ourselves and enquire what are the real social costs of laying the foundations of socialism in the technically and economically undeveloped countries; we should enquire into the cost of our history... but the real cost and the real price: the economic price, the social price, the moral price."

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Theoretical acrobatics are sharply condemned: "It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that we have done everything to stand Marxism on its head. It is not surprising that one day we woke up to find ourselves Hegelians once more.... History was turned into an account of congresses, resolutions, deviations, and fresh resolutions to correct such deviations.... But history cannot make mistakes, and in consequence every new stage requires a new interpretation of all the preceding phases. At best only the interpretation changes, and not the facts as well... history is written backward, from the end to the beginning, often a very distant beginning" (*ibid.*).

The "adventures of the dialectic" are likewise castigated. "In reality, the political function of the doctrine of non-antagonistic contradictions (which logically are, and are not, contradictions at the same time) consisted in throwing a mystical veil over the real contradictions... This doctrine leads to the metaphysical thesis that under the régime in which socialism is being constructed... the struggle for power does not exist, the privileged stratum does not manifest a tendency towards stabilization, and ideological incentives can permanently take the place of material ones."

Marxist economics come under fire. "Can one go on talking even about the relative pauperization (of the working class) in Britain and the U.S.A.? What are the limits of economic planning under contemporary capitalism? Is it possible to maintain the thesis on its structural crisis?" (*ibid.*).

Another author (*Poprostu,* No. 41 [403], October 7, 1956. St. Brodski: "Reflections on a Journey"), after a visit to Western Europe, discusses its "striking prosperity," a remark inconceivable not long ago. He does not attribute this prosperity to rearmament, an argument he no longer takes seriously. Rather, "it is the outcome of Keynesian doctrines which are underestimated and not properly studied (in Poland)." He concludes by suggesting that "the thesis concerning the absolute impoverishment of the working-class can be sustained only by statistical jugglery... for the well-paid categories of workers in many countries comprise not an insignificant section of the working-class, but a considerable part of it."

Such admissions or discoveries give rise to second thoughts on old slogans. Thus Z. Florczak (*Nowa Kultura,* No. 43 [343], October 1, 1956, "Conversation with the West"), raises the awkward question: "What is the present meaning of the vague slogan 'proletarians of all lands' "?, and adds, "It is more than doubtful if (the Australian proletarians) want to unite with the proletarians of Poland. In Australia the minimum wage is so high that it even affects the workers' willingness to raise their standard of living.... At the same time, revolts like the one in Poznan take place in Poland in order to improve elementary living conditions." This passage was not lost on the Moscow *Pravda* of October 20, 1956 ("Anti-Socialist Pronouncements in the Polish

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Press"), which attacked "Mr. Florczak" for trampling underfoot the sacred banner of proletarian internationalism.

Other writers are no less outspoken on this and related topics. One of them confronts the officially inspired enthusiasm with the drab facts of economic life, and remarks with bitter irony: "Our economic position is good, but not hopeless" (B. Wojnar in *Poprostu,* No. 41, October 7, 1956). One of the causes of this state of affairs is that "the system of incentives is perhaps the most imperfect that could have been devised" (St. Brodski, *ibid.*). Another writer affirms that "the chief obstacle to the development of the productive forces are the relations of production," by which he means "the socio-political system called Stalinism" (R. Zimand, *ibid.,* No. 43, October 21, 1956). Two other writers go even further and define it as "a socio-economic system ... in which there is a relationship of economic dependency of the popular masses on the group of administrators. The political expression of this is the dictatorship of the ruling group *over* the proletariat" (S. Chelstowski and W. Godek, "The first patrol," *Poprostu,* No. 44. October 28, 1956). Correctives are sought in the introduction of workers' control, the transformation of State property into social ownership, reinvigoration of market relations, profit-sharing schemes, and the improvement of cost-accounting.

The advocacy of Titoist practices is buttressed by Titoist arguments: "Stalinism, being one of the most radical revisions of Marxism, found its particular expression in its treatment of the rôle of the State and its functions ... For Stalin, the dispossession of the capitalists was not the last but the first act of the State... There is no dictatorship of the proletariat as long as the worker is the hired employee of a State enterprise, and not its master" (*Poprostu,* No. 40, September 30, 1956. Y. Kossek, R. Turski, and W. Wirpsza, "Workers' Control").

IV

While these syndicalist notions were taken up in response to the aspirations of the workers, a young philosopher, L. Kulaczkowski, in an outspoken essay (*Nowe Drogi,* No. 9 [87], September, 1956, pp. 22-53: "Intellectuals and the Communist Movement") stressed the rôle of the intellectuals in the working-class movement. This, the first revisionist manifesto to appear in the Party's official organ, was at the same time the most comprehensive of any yet published.

Kulaczkowski starts from the assumption that the importance of the intellectuals for Communism should be particularly obvious because of "the impasse in which Marxist theory finds itself at present." He questions its validity in relation to four traditional themes: (1) There is no absolute pauperization of the working-class under capitalism. (2) Its crisis theory is inapplicable to contemporary capitalism. (3) The doctrine of socialist revolution stands in need of revision. (4) The doctrine of the Party and its rôle in the State is incorrect.

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Intellectual rigidity is held responsible for the growth of a dogmatic and quasi-religious attitude in Communist circles, culminating in worship of the infallible leader. "Every petrification of doctrine necessarily leads to its transformation into a mythology, surrounded by a ritual cult, turned into an object of devotion, and safeguarded from criticism.... In this situation, embarrassing platitudes are proclaimed as theoretical achievements. It seems preposterous to have to explain that not all inventions are to be attributed to one particular nation...."

"It is harmful," he proceeds, "to limit the scope of scientific enquiries; to proclaim any truths within the scope of scientific enquiry 'politically correct'; to impose upon scientific circles a direction of enquiry; to lay down truths that are taboo and excluded from discussion." Replying to Kolaczkowski in the same number of *Nowe Drogi,* R. Werfel ("The Place of the Communist Intellectual is Within the Framework of the Party") employs the familiar arguments concerning the class character of ideology, and accuses his opponent of "setting the intellectual Communist centers against the Party of the working-class.... If the intellectual Communist milieux want to remain Communist, they should uphold not the slogan of freedom of scientific enquiry *from* the Party, but rather the slogan of freedom of scientific enquiry *within* the Leninist Party.... What is to happen to the Party if one Communist tells the masses one thing, and another something else? We shall then have two or more parties, instead of one Party acting as the vanguard of the working-class.... To deny (the necessity of) such unity of action (and propaganda is also a form of action) signifies *the end of the Party.*"

This, in broad outline, was the tenor of discussion on the eve of the eighth plenum of the Central Committee which saw Gomulka's return to power. One side attempted to reduce the discussion to the problem of power, while the other protested bitterly that "after many years of proclaiming that we live under the most democratic régime possible, we have to invent a new term: democratization" (Y. Kott, *op. cit.*).

Soon after the triumph of Gomulka, the Central Committee of the United Workers' Party, in a melancholy appeal to the "Hungarian brothers," declared: "You and we had undertaken a struggle for socialist democratization in our countries, for equality and sovereignty in relations between socialist countries" (*Trybuna Ludu,* October 29, 1956).

When Soviet tanks rolled into Budapest to reinterpret this doctrine, Gomulka proclaimed himself a "realist." It would not be entirely surprising if, notwithstanding the continued purge of Stalinist diehards from key positions in Poland, the victory of the revisionists should witness an attempt to terminate *popular* revisionism. The problem of its control transcends, however, the narrow framework of party doctrine. Poland first and Hungary later provided a pattern of anti-totalitarian revolt: the literary ferment was followed by a movement among students heading the discontented intelligentsia and joining forces with the

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workers in what became a nation-wide protest against foreign domination and internal oppression. The younger elements of the population provided its dynamic force: the students from the Warsaw Technical High School, the young workers from the Zheran and Zispo factories, etc. The articulation of their demands and effectiveness of their pressure was made possible by the split within the Party of which the doctrinal crisis was only one reflection.

THE PROBLEM OF "NATIONAL COMMUNISM"

Irving Howe

One of the more insidious dangers in political analysis is to name things too soon. Faced with events or situations that are essentially without precedent, we are tempted to pin down their novelty with a phrase. Everyone can provide his own examples, but the one that seems most relevant at the moment is "National Communism."

"National Communism" is today being used to describe, or obscure, the meaning of political tendencies as diverse as those embodied in men like Tito, Gomulka, Djilas and Nagy. Whatever historical reason there may be for this descriptive promiscuity, the time has come to search for greater precision.

I

At the end of the Second World War Stalinist Russia entered a stage of open imperialism. With considerable help from its war-time allies and by employing methods as barbarous politically as they were rapacious economically, Russia reduced the countries of eastern Europe to a semi-colonial status.

Everything that has since happened in eastern Europe can be seen—at least in its beginning—as a reaction to this central fact of Russian power. In a country suffering from foreign oppression, inner social and political divergences tend to be suppressed; the common misery of bearing the imperialist burden, like the common need for resistance, prevents the natural conflicts of domestic interest and opinion from flourishing as they should. If to foreign domination one adds a local satrap government engaged in a sustained civil war against its own people through political terror, forced collectivization and excessive industrialization, it follows that the one passionate concern of almost everybody, no matter what his political views, becomes the "national question."

Now in this very general sense of tracing origins it may be useful to speak of a political phenomenon in eastern Europe called "National Communism." Mainly because they were

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the only public channel available for political life, the Communist parties and their attendant organizations became the means through which opposition to Russian imperialism was first expressed. In its early stages, when a word of dissent constituted an act of high courage, this opposition to the Russians—embodying as it did the almost unanimous national will—had little choice but to find its focus *within* the Communist parties of the satellite countries, even though it was through these very parties that they had suffered a loss or diminution of their independence.

But even at this point, when the whole nation seemed united for a common end, deep clefts of interests were forming. Consider Yugoslavia, the first east European country to rebel against the Russians. The Yugoslav Communist leadership, disinclined to share its power at home but wishing to end its dependence on the Russians, struggled to establish itself as an independent dictatorship: one that would be free from Russian veto yet would command a social system that in essentials may be described as a (perhaps less terrorist, more rationally organized) version of bureaucratic collectivism. Tito's rebellion was not against a social system or even a political ideology: it was designed to modify a relationship of power.

To achieve this end, the Titoists had to call upon and to some extent mobilize the strong national feelings among the Yugoslav people. They also tried to win the active support of the Yugoslav workers by making concessions (the "workers committees" in the factories) that might satisfy, or appear to satisfy, democratic yearnings. All the while, of course, the autocratic limits of these measures were never in question. As Milovan Djilas has written:

> Yugoslav national Communism was, above all, the resistance to Moscow of the Communist party, that is, of its leaders. Not that the people opposed this resistance, not that they did not support it and benefit from it—quite the contrary. But the interests and the initiative of the leaders played a crucial and leading role ... In Yugoslavia, therefore, the entire process was led and *carefully controlled from above,* and tendencies to go further—to democracy—were relatively weak... Yugoslavia supported this discontent [in eastern Europe] as long as it was conducted by the Communist leaders but turned against it—as in Hungary—as soon as it went further ... This revealed that Yugoslav national Communism was unable in its foreign policy to depart from its narrow ideological and bureaucratic class interests ... (*The New Leader,* Nov. 19, 1956)

Djilas' analysis is brilliantly apt—he has paid for it with a three year sentence in Tito's prison—but the one thing he fails to stress is the political importance of people like himself. For no matter how severe the domestic control of the Communist leadership in a country like Yugoslavia might be, it had to reinforce its appeals to national feeling with slogans that touched upon domestic social issues. And in doing this it took the risk of raising what it must regard as the spectre of "Djilasism," that is, the political impulse to extend freedom from Russian dictation to freedom within Yugoslavia itself.

In both Poland and Hungary there was no shortage of candidates for the role of Tito: Communist leaders eager to wrench free from the Russians yet

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keep firm control at home. It was not freedom for their people that they sought, but freedom to rule in their own way. What had been done in Yugoslavia, however, could not easily be repeated in Poland and Hungary. The controlled rebellion of state against state which Tito had managed could not occur in Poland and Hungary without a simultaneous rebellion of the people against the imposed state apparatus.

Many of the reasons for this are familiar and need merely be noted: Tito had behind him a genuine mass party while the Polish and Hungarian Communist parties enjoyed little support among the people; the differences in geography, which should never be forgotten; the presence in Warsaw and Budapest of a working class with a strong socialist tradition that could not be manipulated as easily as were the workers of Belgrade by Tito; the fact that Russian troops were stationed in Poland and Hungary but not in Yugoslavia.

But there is another factor that has not been sufficiently stressed in discussions of eastern Europe: the crisis of leadership that appeared in almost all of the satellite parties. The mere fact that the Titoists had to utilize certain democratic slogans against Stalin—whatever the cynicism or hypocrisy with which they did this—forced a certain modification of their political behavior at home. Ideology reacts even upon those who consciously manipulate it. More importantly, where a Tito may have been engaged in a power maneuver for which ideological decoration was necessary, other leaders of the Communist party—most notably Djilas and Dedijer, but surely some whose names we do not know—felt the break with Stalin as a major intellectual and ethical crisis. For people like Djilas and Dedijer it brought a period of sustained revaluation, the cleansing pain of self-confrontation.

This crisis of thought and values must, I am convinced, be deeper among many of the east European Communists than any of us can quite know. It is not a question of crediting their "good intentions" or believing that scoundrels (as many of them are) can become "good." What seems to be happening among them is the equivalent of that moral crisis in the ruling class which Marx and Lenin specified as an element in a prerevolutionary situation. They discover that the price of ruling in Stalin's way is too costly. They discover that the ideological phrases they had repeated by rote and thereby half begun to believe or half continued to believe, are sheer nonsense. The blow of the Twentieth Russian Party Congress hits them across the face. The contempt and hatred that the masses of their own countries feel toward them begins to express itself. Unless we succumb to the notion that Communist leaders are simply agents of Satan, we must be ready to recognize that at least some elements of the Communist ruling class in eastern Europe are deeply shaken in their faith. Some, like Djilas and Nagy, have even broken out of ideological bondage and found their way to a kind of democratic socialism.

One should not underestimate the role of ideology. In Communist countries ideology has so great a currency, and in times of trouble the problem of rationalizing power becomes so difficult, that the east European state bureaucrat cannot solve his intellectual crisis simply by settling for his

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interest in preserving the *status quo*. It is here that the perversion of Marxist ideas by the Communists tends to boomerang against them. Ideology seems to take on a life of its own, prompting people to action which the masters of the state have not counted upon; and Marxist ideology, because even in its most grotesque distortions it appeals to "progressive" sentiments, is particularly dangerous to autocratic regimes that use it. When the students of Madrid march against Franco, they seldom think of confronting him with the original slogans of fascism; when the students of Warsaw and Budapest march against the Stalinists, they employ the very language that the rulers of their country have taught them. This fact, which might be described as the "reversibility of ideology," has caused and will continue to cause sleepless nights among the despots of eastern Europe.

Under the pressure of the great events in Budapest, Nagy and some of his colleagues seem to have undergone an intellectual self-liberation similar to that which Djilas had slowly been working out for himself in Belgrade. While in the "sanctuary" of Tito's embassy in Budapest (it is still not clear whether the Yugoslavs betrayed him to the Russians), Nagy told a Swedish journalist that the revolutions in eastern Europe meant *"the beginning of the end of Communism as a social system."* This remarkable statement—which only persons of malice or foolishness will take as proposing a return to capitalism—indicates that the momentum of east European politics, if allowed to proceed freely on its own, would soon have to break past the narrow limits of "National Communism."

For suppose that free political life were now possible in Hungary and Poland. One of the first things to happen would be that "National Communism" would crumble into a number of political tendencies. People like Djilas, Nagy and their Polish counterparts would probably find it easier to cooperate with socialists like Anna Kethly than with the remaining orthodox Communists. A struggle would then ensue between those who wish to continue with a milder form of totalitarian collectivism (the true "National Communists") and those who wish to break through to some version of democratic socialism; in other words, a struggle between the views represented by Tito and those represented by Djilas.

From the perspective of the Kremlin rulers, it is clear that the mild deviation of a Tito provides serious openings to the utter heresy of a Djilas or a Nagy. Hence, the Khrushchev strategy of trying to work out a practical agreement with Tito and (for the moment at least) with Gomulka, while simultaneously announcing a half-way swing back to ideological Stalinism ("when it comes to fighting imperialism, we are all Stalinists.")

II

Poland now presents what is the most ambiguous and complex of situations, one that conforms neither to the Yugoslav nor Hungarian pattern. As in Hungary, a popular revolution took place during the last months of 1956, but a revolution that did not entirely shatter the power of the Polish Communist party. (It *nearly* did. "No Polish Communist," writes Sidney Gruson, the *New York Times* correspondent, "seriously tries any long-

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er in private conversation to gloss over the people's lack of faith in the party.") By skillfully and hurriedly placing itself at the head of the Polish uprising, the Gomulka leadership managed, for the time being, to contain it within an unstable form of authoritarian Communist rule.

In Poland today there would seem to be a tacit alliance, within and near the Gomulka wing of the party, between those who would like to "stabilize" the recent changes within the context of a one-party state and those who are edging toward a democratic socialist perspective; that is, between those who wish for a Polish version of Titoism (though the events in Poland have already gone considerably beyond anything that happened in Yugoslavia) and those who wish for a Polish version of "Djilasism." From reading excerpts of articles written in the Polish press (see the report by L. Labedz in this DISSENT), one gains the strong impression that many Polish Communist intellectuals have made a complete break. Without putting it in so many words, they have begun to take the path of Djilas or Czeslaw Milosz (*The Captive Mind.*) Others, while continuing to employ the vocabulary of Communism and finding it necessary to function within the Communist party, seem clearly to be political *marranos*: socialists in secret. Still others, perhaps the majority of Gomulka's supporters, are experiencing a severe crisis of conscience which leaves them uncertain and troubled.

This alliance among the Gomulka supporters (some of whom, like the students, have also begun to act as very sharp critics) is based less on common belief than a common fear. What holds these people together is the enormous pressure exerted upon them from two sides, first and primarily by the Russians, which takes the form of the constant possibility of intervention and regular sabotage by the Russian wing of the party (the "Natolin" faction), and second by the traditional Polish Right, chauvinist and anti-Semitic, which has begun to make itself felt from below.

The dilemma of the Gomulka leadership is this: it fears that if it goes "too far" in the direction of independence, the Russians will employ brute force, yet the only way it can gain the enthusiastic support of the Polish people is by continuing and extending the steps toward "democratization" that it has begun to take. In the long run, a choice is unavoidable; but then, in the long run, the Gomulka wing of the party is likely to succumb to the centrifugal forces that are today barely held together by common fear of the Russians.

Thus, shortly before the managed elections in January it became clear that if votes were to be cast on the basis of *domestic* political relationships, the party would lose heavily—not so much to the discredited "Natolin" faction, the meagerness of whose popular support is indicated by its resort to desperate anti-Semitic rumors—but to large masses of workers and peasants who are rightfully sick of the whole Communist experience. Only when Gomulka made his dramatic statement that to cross off the party's candidates was to cross Poland off the map—which meant to transform the election into a demonstration of national sovereignty against the Russians—and only after he had made an *entente* with the Church, was he able to win so overwhelming a majority

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at the polls. But it would still be naive to suppose that this majority was very much more than a vote against the threat of Russian pressure.

Similarly, Gomulka has found that his efforts to dismiss thousands of second-rank functionaries in the Polish party who are still loyal to his predecessors is much more difficult than he had supposed. These bureaucrats stick like leeches to their jobs. Only in situations where Gomulka has been able to mobilize the workers in the large Warsaw factories and the students in the universities has he managed to achieve his immediate aims. But soon these independent workers' committees and independent student organizations prove an embarrassment to his government—as when the student organizations, committed to genuine democracy, protested against the repressive atmosphere created during the elections or when the workers in the Zeran auto plant denounced the party for its failure to support the Hungarian revolution.

In Poland the situation is further complicated by the fact that the opposition to Gomulka contains a reactionary component. (Although it is wise to discount some reports of anti-Semitism as maneuvers of the Communist factions against each other, it would be absurd to deny that anti-Semitism exists.) On some issues there is virtual popular unanimity: e.g., the withdrawal of Russian troops, a demand which, in opposition to Gomulka's compromise, the progressive workers and students voice and the reactionary nationalists support. But to the extent that the national aspect of Polish politics recedes—that is, if and when the threat of Russian intervention declines—the distance between the opponents of the government from the right and its critics from the left will surely be widened.

Yet nothing could be more mistaken than to urge a muting of the struggle for more democracy in Poland on the grounds that it will give opportunities to the Right. Chauvinism and anti-Semitism have survived in Poland partly because Communist terror created the kind of social atmosphere in which such atavistic sentiments could flourish. The risks of freedom, which its supporters need never underestimate, are genuine; but they must be taken. Democracy in Poland would not assure a complete or immediate solution to the problem of anti-Semitism; but only through the ventilation of public life made possible by democracy could this problem begin to be solved.

III

A number of American fellow-travelers, clutching the remnants of their faith, have attached themselves to the Gomulka regime and found in it a symbol of their hope for a renovated "socialism." This seems to me a delusion. Welcome and remarkable as the changes in Poland may be, they do not yet come to a decisive break with an oppressive *social system*. The workers of Poland do not have the right to strike or to organize free trade unions; opposition parties are not permitted to function freely; the indispensable freedoms of speech, press and assembly are still far from being secure or complete; Poland continues to be part of the Communist bloc. So long as these conditions persist, democrats and socialists have no business identifying themselves with the Polish regime—except insofar as it

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serves to express the will of the Polish people in resisting Russian intervention.

Recently, in fact, there have been a number of signs that the Gomulka government is trying to stabilize its authoritarian rule. The elections, certainly not free in any serious sense, aroused bitter criticism from the Polish students, and as a result one of their non-party organizations was compelled to disband. That is an ominous sign. As the price for support from the Chinese, the Poles shamefacedly denounced the Hungarian revolution. That too is ominous. At the moment, then, it would appear that those elements within the Gomulka regime which favor an authoritarian stabilization and a "tightening up" at home have the upper hand.

Nonetheless, it seems to me a mistake to say, as some socialists do, that Poland today remains a totalitarian country; for to say this is either to stretch a term beyond analytic usefulness or to fail to recognize what has been happening in Poland. The kind of articles from which Mr. Labedz quotes are not written in a totalitarian country. The limited freedom of speech—limited mainly to those who in effect agree "not to rock the boat," yet not a mere masquerade—is not what one associates with a totalitarian society. In Yugoslavia Djilas sits in jail; in Poland his counterparts still publish articles and in some instances hold government posts. And while it may be true that the threat of the Russians can be demagogically utilized by Gomulka as a pretext for throttling the democratic yearnings of the people, it would be foolhardy to deny that the threat is very real, that it does present a grave problem to *any* Polish government and that it cannot but exert a constricting influence upon all Polish life.

If one must apply a label to the Gomulka regime, I would say that it is an authoritarian government functioning within a collectivist (but *not* a socialist) economy. Unavoidably, such a description is clumsy and may not capture the point that there is a fluid situation in Poland today. What it does do, however, is to characterize the basic socio-political relations in Poland between the rulers and the ruled. And at a time when new illusions are rapidly being precipitated, this characterization can be very important.

For socialists the following attitude would seem to be indicated: we welcome and applaud every step toward a loosening of the dictatorship, we sympathize with those figures in Poland who are genuinely moving toward the values of democratic socialism, but we do not accept the Gomulka regime as ours. On the one hand, socialists should acknowledge the tactical difficulties and necessities of the Polish situation, and refrain from peremptory demands from afar as to what should be done by those in Poland whom we can regard as our comrades; on the other hand, we need to insist upon the conditions which alone permit a society to be described as socialist.

Admittedly the problems touched upon in these notes are knotty ones, but we can now feel, as a result of recent happenings in eastern Europe, that the need for reworking the ideas of democratic socialism is felt not only among socialists in the West but also among new friends in the East. That is no small victory!

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HERESY AND MODERN CULTURE

Richard Chase

In recent years there has been a marked interest in what may be called "literary sociology," and a good many books and articles on "the situation" of the American writer and of American literature have appeared. To judge by the perplexity and despair of their authors, they have been inspired by a sense that unprecedented dilemmas face the serious novelist, poet, and critic of our time.

Although Walt Whitman and Henry Adams were concerned with the relation of the writer to society and with the social value and function of his work, the genre of literary sociology in its modern form stems from Van Wyck Brooks's *Three Essays on America* (the first essay, "America's Coming-of-Age," was written in 1915). This eloquent book was the first radical response to the problems created by the growing alienation of the writer and the degradation of culture that was both cause and effect of his alienation. These problems have been considered in various ways and at various times by such writers as H. L. Mencken, Edmund Wilson, Lewis Mumford, and Malcolm Cowley. There have been many differences of opinion among them, but from the beginning these critics have agreed that two main enemies of a free and serious literature were conformity to bourgeois values and the traditional cleavage in American life between intelligence and action, art and reality, theory and practice, highbrow and lowbrow.

By now, however, the phrase "bourgeois values" has come to sound somewhat archaic and there has been much discussion of the implications of mass culture. In the innocent old days an adequate ethic of rebellion could be arrived at simply by being against the puritanism, commercialism, and philistinism of the bourgeoisie. Now we are confronted with mass mediocrity and mass conformity—a situation that is far more perplexing and ambigous. But mass civilization has not fundamentally changed the problems raised by the split in our society between a high and a low culture which Brooks was correct in tracing back to the 18th century—a split he conveniently symbolized by the "highbrow" Jonathan Edwards and the "lowbrow" Benjamin Franklin.

The latest book in the field of literary sociology is John W. Aldridge's *In Search of Heresy: American Literature in an Age of Conformity.** Aldridge's book is alternately witty, turgid, mistaken, and willfully perverse. It is not in itself a work of great importance; it generates more heat than light, and it does not follow

* McGraw, Hill, $4.00.

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through with its several insights. But it is so characteristic of its time that there is some interest in observing its implications.

For one thing, this book keeps reminding one of a political act perpetrated in the arena of culture. The author is like many other contemporary critics whose judgments are permeated with an animus determined by the critic's conception of himself as belonging among highbrows, middlebrows, or lowbrows, or as being intellectual or non- or anti-intellectual. This cultural animus, with its attendant longing to buttress aesthetic judgment with non-aesthetic ideology, is intensified by the apparent absence of those hotly contested political ideas that once engaged the minds of literary critics. Aldridge often strikes one as a combative political partisan whom history has robbed of both party and politics. Finding himself in a political vacuum, he keeps on slugging, but both his enemies and his weapons are cultural attitudes and opinions. Consequently his means are ill-adapted to his materials and to his ends. Often he envelops in a trumped-up ideology what are really only matters of taste. On the other hand, middlebrowism, which is now the fundamental challenge to the cultural critic, never gets seriously examined at all.

Ostensibly Aldridge agrees with his predecessors among literary sociologists that the enemies of a serious literature are conformity and the split in our culture. But there is a difference. The modern movement of cultural protest and advance guardism that began in this country with Brooks and his contemporaries assumed that the bastion of conformity and mediocrity was the middlebrow center and that this had to be destroyed and replaced, or at least revitalized, by an alliance of the highbrow and the lowbrow. These writers were aware that academicism, commercialism, and the gradual institutionalization of literature were producing a mediocre middlebrow culture which was rapidly filling the gap between the highbrow and the lowbrow. In their darker moments they prophetically saw what in the Age of Eisenhower has actually come to pass in the literary world: an almost complete smothering of heresy and insurgence by an all encompassing middlebrowism. But during the 1920's and 1930's they counted on a dialectic of the extremes to keep American cultural life open, vital, and flowing. The insurgent extremes which, it was hoped, would instruct and strengthen each other, were embodied by writers like Waldo Frank and Sherwood Anderson—in the highbrow* Frank one

* I have elsewhere tried to define these terms as follows: "A *highbrow* is a man with an ideal of disinterested intelligence who makes strong demands on our powers of attention, reason, sensibility, and seriousness. A *lowbrow* is a man whose sense of things has been formed by the give and take of life, and whose ideas come from inherited folk wisdom, folk art, or folk prejudice, or from the myths conveyed to him by the mass media or by the lodge, legion, or union to which he belongs. The *middlebrow* is by nature indefinable except in terms of other things that *can* be defined. He puts on a protective coloration under which we see the attempt to resist definition by foregoing the hazards of a highbrow or lowbrow view. The protective coloration suggests a general benignity, powerlessness, and belief in moderation, an attitude of being bewildered by what other people claim to understand, a belief in the virtue of gentle, wistful humor." It should be added that although these terms suggest certain universal and timeless values, they are strictly speaking socio-historical categories brought into general use by Brooks and his associates about forty years ago. They apply with full accuracy only to relatively recent socio-literary phenomena.

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saw a prophetic intelligence, in the lowbrow Anderson a native instinct, pragmatic force, and closeness to reality.

It is true that Brooks and his immediate successors often advocated a revitalized middle culture into which the extremes might be absorbed and reconciled (it is true also that Brooks himself came around in later years to a middlebrow position which was anything but vital). Yet these earlier writers were correct in thinking that if revitalization were to occur, it would be a revitalization of the middle by the extremes, rather than vice versa. The novelty of Aldridge's book, and also its essential misinterpretation of the American scene, is that in effect the author presents the reigning middlebrowism as a form of heresy and charges the highbrow and the lowbrow with succumbing to conformity. This ironic entombment of the modern tradition of cultural protest appears to the tenacious reader of *In Search of Heresy* to be about equally the result of the author's uncertainty as to his own beliefs and his real if unarticulated commitment to the middle way of culture. One thing is clear: if you are merely against the conventional culture but have no real way of saying why or of offering an idea of a better culture, you wind up as what Mr. Aldridge sometimes seems to be—a middlebrow by default.

In Search of Heresy contains an introductory statement called "The Choice of Heresy," two long essays called "The Situation of the American Writer" and "The Writer in the University," and a shorter piece called "The Function of the Book Critic." I am concerned with these sociological essays, although the book also contains a number of literary pieces. One must sympathize with Aldridge's Introduction, where he says that nowadays there is only a small margin of "possibility for action beyond conformism." He goes on to say that "the paternalism of the cultural institutions, the institutional values of money, status, security, and power, have filled and padded the vacuum left by the loss of the values of disaffiliation and dissent." He observes that in contrast to the conformism of earlier decades "present-day conformism is not morally or ethically based, but rather emphasizes passive and amoral qualities — comfort, security, peace of mind—which do not represent a dogma or suggest a heresy." And he points out that, this being so, present-day conformism is hard to account for and hard to combat.

It would seem, then, that more than ever the polemic of cultural protest must be based on a stable, clear, and far-reaching theory of American culture. Not that such a theory is easy to come by. But the least the critic needs is a method analogous to Marxism or to the cultural dialectics of Brooks. Unlike his predecessors in literary sociology, Aldridge lacks such a theory. He seems to lack even a sense of what a convincing social criticism is, and instead of analysing our literary culture, he irritably attacks (like practically everybody these days) "the university critics" and allied "highbrows." By "university critics" Aldridge means not only the New Critics, like Cleanth Brooks, Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, and R. P. Blackmuir, but nearly every other contemporary critic who has tried to write about literature in a serious manner, including, oddly enough, John W. Aldridge.

In both of the first two chapters of

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Heresy the method is the same. The author makes a broad indictment of the times and of the general situation, and then he covertly narrows the scope of discussion down to the field within which the enemy (already decided on) operates, at the same time mythologizing the enemy into a monster. Thus the chapter of "The Situation of the American Writer" recalls to our minds the sense we had just after World War II of an emerging literary activity. The names of Jean Stafford, Carson McCullers, John Horne Burns, Norman Mailer, Paul Bowles, and Truman Capote are cited as promising young writers of the time and many others might also have been cited. Mr. Aldridge's judgment about what happened seems, in 1956, to be true: something blighted the brief burst of genius. By the end of the 1940's, it was clear that with one or two exceptions these young writers

> had largely failed to take the positions of authority and influence which had appeared to be opening to them only a short time before. In fact, the situation with which they were now confronted was such as to invalidate entirely the system of accession to power and prominence, the very possibility of reputation in the old sense, which had been the feature of the decades just past . . .

And what was the cause of this tragedy? Aldridge has no doubt that it was the universities. In some unexplained manner, the "reproductive and energizing force" of the movement was "cooled down to small fastidious tics experienced by graduate students."

The second chapter deals with the new institutionalization of culture and the bad effects this has had on the free spirit of creativity. An important problem this—but it cannot be dealt with simply by blaming, as Mr. Aldridge does, the *Partisan Review* and Leslie Fiedler. The main value of these chapters and of *Heresy* as a whole lies in certain of the author's incidental remarks; for example, his remarks about the Foundations and the paradox of mass-circulation "little" magazines, like *New World Writing* and *Discovery*.

IT SHOULD BE an axiom of the cultural critic that any radical protest against conformity in this country has to begin with a declaration against middlebrowism. The real centers of power in the literary world have to be recognized as such. These centers of power are not, as Aldridge claims, schools of highbrow critics or magazines like the *Partisan Review* and *Kenyon Review*. They are the New York *Times Book Review, Time, The Saturday Review,* and magazines like *Harper's* and the *Atlantic*. For these are the organs* that continue to form the ideas of most of those who in and out of universities distribute the cash and make or break reputations. The momentary plausibility of the claim that there is a cultural tyranny of highbrows, critics, and quarterlies is only apparent. It is made so because highbrows, critics, and quarterlies have had

* According to a survey of four large universities instituted by the University of North Carolina Press, faculty members read book reviews in the following magazines, arranged from most read to least read: *Time, The New Yorker, Harper's,* New York *Times Book Review, Saturday Review, Atlantic, The Reporter, Newsweek, Scientific American, New Republic.* Presumably the *Times Book Review* would have rated higher had the survey been confined to teachers of literature, although it is possible that, for example, the *New Republic,* which maintains a relatively high literary level, might have rated better too.

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a flurry of prestige and power in the last fifteen years. That the *Times Book Review* should be ostensibly the most powerful opinion-making organ among literary people is a national disaster. But there are few heads of English departments or book reviewers across the country who are not suspicious of teachers and writers who deviate from its vague and disorganized but generally middlebrow views.

It is hard to say just where in the miasmal hierarchy of the middle Aldridge stands. My guess is that he is a middlebrow with a certain highbrow severity and a good deal of highbrow rhetoric. Thus he speaks of "the fear of ideas and distinctions which, in egghead and middlebrow circles, has taken the form of contrived affability and a tense avoidance of argumentative tension." This is accurate, but it leads one to reflect that in Mr. Aldridge's own unaffable writing the tension is emotional and rhetorical rather than intellectual. We seem to locate his taste by observing that he attacks the conformism and mediocrity of Herman Wouk's *Marjorie Morningstar* and Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit,* which might be called lower middlebrow or middle middlebrow successes, but that he admires William Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness,* a middlebrow novel with flourishes of highbrow rhetoric.

The difficulty one has in grasping Aldridge's position is partly the fault of middlebrowism itself, which from one point of view at least is fundamentally a way of avoiding definition in order to gain worldly power and public esteem. The view that the intellectual and literary health of America lies in a middle culture is now the dominant view, as with the exception of sporadic advance-guard opinion it has been since the time of W. D. Howells, who stood, at the beginning of our modern literary tradition, in a mediating position between two writers greater than himself, Henry James and Mark Twain. It should be clear by now, however, that in America no radical socio-literary criticism can either derive from or champion a middle way of culture. The inevitable result of such an attempt is what we find in Mr. Aldridge's book—a rhetorical polemic without clarity or force. The first postulate for the literary sociologist is: History so far shows that the cultural health of America lies in an unresting dialectic of extreme views and tastes and that the middle way fails to normalize and consolidate the vitality of the extremes but destroys it instead.

Which Column D'ya Read?

"Gomulka is the Kerensky of Polish liberalism." Peter Wiles, *The New Leader,* Feb. 11, 1957, p. 17 column 1.

"Gomulka is a charismatic leader of the Lenin type." Peter Wiles, *The New Leader,* Feb. 11, 1957, column 2, p. 17.

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THE KIBBUTZ: UTOPIA IN CRISIS

Stanley Diamond

Israel is a tiny, unformed country of deceptive surfaces and complex roots. It is a State, but not yet a nation. There is an Israeli idiom. But a culture remains to be created in the teeth of, among other things, a massive diffusion of money, machines, and modes of thinking from Western urban society.

Since Israel has not yet discovered her identity, the danger is that one will be manufactured for her after the image, and in accordance with the needs, of Western bourgeois society. In the meantime, driven by the cruel imperatives of survival, Israel is forced to be too many things to too many men. Capitalists are encouraged to invest under quite favorable conditions; socialists are told that Israel is a unique pathway to Utopia; or Israel is represented as the bridge between East and West, a magic link in time and space uniting disparate cultures into a new synthesis. To the potential immigrant, Israel is described as a place where a disturbed Jewish identity can be "normalized" into a sound and healthy national experience of the self, that is to say, where Jews, after shedding the soiled garments of the Galut, can step forth like other people as a recognized nation among the nations. Simultaneously, Israel is envisioned as a messianic Zionist-Jewish movement, leading all people everywhere, by example, into the promised land. In short, Israel presents so many faces to a Western world terribly engaged with the Jew as symbol, and is the target of so many projections that what Israel *is* lies half-buried under the weight of what Israel *must be, ought to be, can be, will be,* and *was.* Since Israel does not yet know herself, how can she be known?

We can, therefore, congratulate Professor Melford Spiro for his refreshingly clear and competent "anthropological study" of a Kibbutz, the collective settlement which was both the quintessence of the Labor Zionist revolt and an anchor of the emerging State structure.* Basing himself on participant observation, and the case method, Spiro has succeeded in drawing an unusually accurate portrait of Kibbutz life, informed by interpretations that are often sound and convincing. The book is uncluttered with the usual jargon, and its concreteness balances its theoretical probing.

* KIBBUTZ—VENTURE IN UTOPIA, by Melford E. Spiro. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1956. 266 pages.

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Spiro informs us at the outset that we are to regard his monograph as a preliminary study, dealing with the Kibbutz as it has been established and experienced by the older generation of pioneer settlers. He promises a later study of the Sabras (the native born generation) and their kibbutz, in order to determine what viability this highly specialized society may have after, as he puts it, following Weber and Mannheim, the "routinization of charisma" has set in and the "utopia of the fathers has become the ideology of the sons."

QUITE PROPERLY, Spiro views the Kibbutz as the organic life-expression of the pioneer settlers. He outlines the dual perspective in which the community must be seen in order to be understood: as a dedicated colonization instrument of the national Zionist undertaking, and as an arena within which the utopian motives of the founders were acted out. The former function of the Kibbutz, national-economic and military, need not detain us. Whatever else can be said about it, it is a *fait accompli* of heroic dimensions, to which the State itself bears witness.

The latter function, in so far as its larger socialist implications are concerned, always was and remains problematic. Yet it was this vision of the Kibbutz as a new society that not only spurred its members but engaged the attention of people throughout the world to whom Zionism was neither a central issue nor a personal commitment. What was not understood here was that the very institutions of the Kibbutz which qualified it for its national role simultaneously served as channels for the discharge of the utopian energies of the devoted Kibbutznik. That is to say, the radically collectivized form of the Kibbutz can be undertood as a necessary adaptation to the tasks of pioneering a dangerous and desolate land with little capital and less experience. But the fierce commitment to the Kibbutz as Kibbutz, the ultimate rather than merely utilitarian valuation of its particular institutions, can only be comprehended in terms of an over-reaction of the old settlers against what they experienced as and labeled "petty bourgeois" Jewish life in Eastern Europe. This reaction had many of the characteristics of an adolescent rebellion, subjectively perceived as a social revolution of universal significance. The rejection of the nuclear family unit, the compulsive, quasi-religious idealization of manual labor, the contempt for urban life, the search for a new collective identity seen in necessary opposition to the individual as such, the asceticism, the elitism, above all, the conception of the Jews, that is, of themselves, as parasites, whose very natures had to be cleansed and whose destiny it was to create a new generation sprung from the soil of Palestine as superior but "normalized" men—all of these motivations were symptomatic of a romantic and cultistic rebellion.

Yet they also supplied the élan, without which the Kibbutz could hardly have survived, save as a work camp, no matter what the objec-

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tive needs of Zionist colonization. Later, of course, the institutions which crystallized out of these sometimes hardly conscious motivations were rationalized in Marxist, Freudian, or ultimate humanist terms; but they were none of these to begin with. For the Kibbutz was not a rationally planned society, whose furniture merely needs some detailed re-arrangement in order to reveal to us the layout of the future. It is, and the point cannot be emphasized strongly enough, a highly specialized society, satisfying the historically created needs, both objective and subjective, of a Jewish generation in transition from the Shtetl or its equivalent, to Statehood.

Let the enthusiasts beware. Communal dining halls, collective methods of rearing children, the banishment of money, and so on, have little or no relevance to realistic definitions or imperatives of socialism. Nor is there any necessary connection between the categories of bourgeois and private, or collective and socialist in the sense that most Kibbutznikim make these correlations

Kibbutz meanings, institutions, values, and achievements are unique, they arose in a peculiar and unprecedented historic context, and they cannot be generalized beyond it. This is certainly the reason why the Kibbutzim have failed to attract new immigrants, whether of Eastern or Western origin, in significant numbers. But it is also the reason why Kibbutz members were characterized as culture heroes by the Yishuv, the basic, predominantly Eastern European population of Israel. The Kibbutz pioneers acted out what most of the early Zionist settlers identified with or felt but, for one reason or another, were incapable of doing.

THE ABOVE STRICTURES apply to all the Kibbutzim, and perhaps even more pertinently to the "Marxist" Kibbutzim affiliated with Hashomer Hatzair, one of whose member communities served as the locus of Spiro's field work. As Spiro points out, the "Marxist," actually Stalinist, orientation of his Kibbutz was extraordinarily rigid and mechanical. Indeed, he interprets this Stalinism as, in effect, a superego, that is, as a "good" father image substituting for the "bad" Jewish fathers whom the veteran settlers rejected. And he sees the Marxism of the Kibbutz as a new, transcendental religion replacing the orthodox Judaism of the European past. Although psychoanalytic interpretations of political ideology are always suspect and usually irrelevant, the curious role played by this "Marxism-Stalinism" within the context of the left wing Kibbutzim does have a familiar Freudian ring. Rationally considered, however, it probably functions as an alternative value system for people perceptive enough to recognize the utopian limitations of the Kibbutz as Kibbutz yet sophisticated enough to ask the question, "Is Zionism enough?"

Be that as it may, Spiro, who cannot be accused of Marxist inclinations, inadvertently helps reveal the basic contradiction inherent in an agrarian commune, "an island in a (predominantly) capitalist

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sea," with a restricted membership, which is dependent for its very existence on non-socialist sources of support yet poses as the spearhead of revolutionary social change in Israel.

What Spiro does not tell us is that the manifest Marxist goals of the Hashomer Hatzair Kibbutzim, their Stalinism aside, are blocked not only by their position vis a vis Israel as a whole, but are simply irrelevant to their internal social organization. That is, there exists no necessary connection between the fundamental form of the Kibbutz and its political allegiance. The Israeli Kibbutzim are divided into three major, and two inconsequential Federations, with a total membership of seventy thousand, comprising about 4½ per cent of the total population of the country, and one quarter of the agricultural population. Relative to the country at large, they are shrinking rather than expanding, whereas cooperative villages (Moshavei Ovdim) are proliferating rapidly. Though the political allegiances of the Kibbutzim range from Center to Left, including two orthodox religious groupings but excluding the Communists, their basic institutional forms are almost identical.

It is, therefore, evident that the energies discharged by the left wing Kibbutzim, particularly by the Marxist oriented, in attempting to fix the final details of the ultimate commune, that is, in focusing on the specialized form, weakens their revolutionary sting. This pre-occupation also leads to ideological storms whose intensity is increased by the narrowness of their circumference, even when the issues in controversy are objectively unimportant or when the distance between the disputants, as in recent political schisms, does not justify the economic cost or personal tensions involved. Indeed, as indicated below, a good proportion of the tensions in the Kibbutz, although they tend to be rationalized in political and ideological terms, are generic to the social form itself.

It is also evident that the Marxist or more generalized left wing doctrines of the majority of Kibbutzim are super-impositions on an institutional form which arose for reasons having little to do with such ideologies. These doctrines therefore have a way of dissolving into mere utopian play. As Murray Weingarten points out in his straightforward memoir, *Life in a Kibbutz,* Marxist and Kibbutz purposes are divergent. But if it is difficult to determine whether Spiro's criticism of the Marxist orientation of the Hashomer Hatzair Kibbutzim is to be taken as a criticism of Marxism per se or as an analysis of the inappropriateness of Marxism in a Kibbutz context, it is at least clear that his identification of the older settlers as a "class-conscious proletariat par excellence" is misplaced.

It is to Spiro's credit that he concludes his book with a frank and perceptive exposition of the crisis through which the entire Kibbutz movement is now struggling. However, we would have appreciated more information on some of the external aspects of this crisis; for example, the symptomatic problem of hired labor.

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As I have indicated, the highly specialized form of the Kibbutz has failed to attract new members. This is not a new dilemma, for the Kibbutzim were never vehicles for the absorption of mass immigration, although the average Kibbutz probably trained or oriented at least three times the number of people it permanently settled. The plain fact is that today many, probably the majority, of Kibbutzim have more land and resources than they can possibly exploit, given the size and nature of their regular labor forces. This means that they are backed into the position of hiring labor. If they take the logical step, then they are in danger of being converted into managerial cooperatives, in effect, internal capitalist enterprises. Indeed the few Kibbutzim that operate light industrial establishments seem to have made this transition. In doing so, they cannot avoid abusing the cardinal principle of the Kibbutz, known as *avoda atzmit* (self, as opposed to wage, labor). They thus cease to exist as Kibbutzim. But if, on the other hand, they prohibit hired labor, they fail to justify themselves economically within the State structure. And the fact that today most kinds of hired labor are cheaper to support than most members aggravates the problem.

Another problem is relevant here. As the adult members grow older, as asceticism declines in attractiveness, and as the Kibbutz increases its relative solvency, more funds are expended on consumer goods and creature comforts. This means that a larger portion of the "surplus value" accruing from the labor of certain categories of the membership, and from hired labor, where it exists, is diverted to the benefit of other members. An inevitable process of internal economic differentiation sets in, of "exploitation," and this is exacerbated by the private goods that some members procure from friends and relatives. Now none of this would seem very significant to a hard headed capitalist or socialist with larger ends realistically in mind, but within the intimate contexture of the Kibbutz it has a shattering effect, *precisely because the Kibbutz, in its classic form, has traditionally been viewed as an end in itself.*

ALTHOUGH OTHER ASPECTS of the external crisis of the Kibbutz cannot be pursued in detail here, they can perhaps be summed up in the words of the manager of a commercial bank in Jerusalem that had made extensive loans to the collectives: "Kibbutz socialism is the kind we capitalists like." Indeed, a stringent economic analysis of the ownership structure of the Kibbutz would, I believe, reveal that a variety of organizations, and even some individuals, hold equity of one type or another, but that the average Kibbutznik simply exchanges labor for services while in residence. This was necessary and acceptable during the pioneer phase of development, when the national and socialist roles of the collectives tended to fuse, and when, in any case, manual labor was a moral imperative, a desire, an atonement, an end in itself,

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and not merely an objective function. Whether it will remain acceptable, even when no longer necessary, depends, of course, upon the redefinition of objectives and loyalties that seems bound to occur within the State after the Zionist chrysalis is, for all practical purposes, fully shed.

But, as Spiro states in the most significant section of his book, the Kibbutz crisis is also internal; *it is characteristic of the social form of the Kibbutz itself.* He writes: "... the basic causes for the crisis are to be found *within* [the Kibbutz], and may be attributed to the social structure, the values of the Kibbutz, and the changing psychology of its members."

External factors aside, the unique and specialized internal structure, that very network of institutions which defined the Kibbutz and gave it the stature of a dramatic social experiment, is today being called into serious question. In Spiro's words, "It is all but impossible for the average *chaver* [member] to enjoy more than a few moments of solitude; even the privacy which most people enjoy at meals or in the shower is impossible. *As some chaverim observed, it is entirely possible to cooperate with other people even when one does not love them; but unless one loves them, it is all but impossible to be in constant interaction with them. And it is this impossibility which the Kibbutz, in effect, imposes on its members by its values of group dynamics and its consequent institutions of communal living.*"

And further, "the *chaverim* are willing to share property and skills, but many of them resent the sharing of experiences, and this has been a major source of tension in the Kibbutz, and an obstacle to brotherhood."

In other words, the Kibbutz tends toward a public exploitation of the personality, rather than its social encouragement, and this is the result of what may be termed "over-collectivization." Put another way, the Kibbutz abuses the spirit of cooperation by attempting to embody love institutionally, by insisting, as it were, that people can and must tap new dimensions of moral experience through the mechanical expedient of its group structure. It is my conviction that most Kibbutz members are, today, aware of this. Indeed, the sense of failure in personal relations, the belief that the "New Man" has not been created, is, as Spiro indicates, a subjective aspect of the crisis in the Kibbutz. But the commitment to the classic collective form is still so strong, so symbolic of the revolt of the older members against "petty bourgeois" Jewish life in the Shtetl, and so closely identified with "ultimate socialism" that most members insist that the institutions have revealed the inadequacies of Man, rather than vice-versa. As the Kibbutznikim often say, "The Kibbutz, as a social form, is excellent. It is men who are not worthy."

This commitment to the classic form of the Kibbutz has still another aspect, which Spiro does not touch upon. The membership, par-

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ticularly the leaders of the movement, recognize that Kibbutz institutions operate with unusual rigidity. This means that the abandonment of any single key institution would signify the extinction of the Kibbutz as Kibbutz. For example, the surrender of the communal dining hall, even if financially feasible, would instantly dissolve the collective structure, as would the abandonment of the collective method of child rearing, and so on. The psychological results of such action could be disastrous, precisely because the Kibbutz has identified socialism with such limited institutions. And not only socialism, but the ultimate good society. The dissolution of these institutions would symbolize the exhaustion of the original "revolutionary" drive out of which, in conjunction with pioneer material conditions, the collective form developed. It is therefore possible that the socialist interests of the members would wither away, a familiar phenomenon in communal experiments, since they had, after all, experienced what they perceived as the ultimate commune and found it insupportable.

It is for this reason, apparently, that even minor changes in Kibbutz structure are accompanied by such agony. The committed Kibbutznik regards them as a betrayal of his original vision, as the beginning of the end. Many leaders of the movement fight a desperate rearguard action against modifications in the classic form or ideology, while refusing to entertain the possibility that the form itself may be in crisis.

It is pertinent that, when I was in Israel, one prominent leader of the Movement told me, with unusual candor, "It seems that as people grow older, they lose their enthusiasm for the Kibbutz way. The survival of the Kibbutzim depends upon the continuous recruitment of young idealists. And when they grow older, we will need still more." It seemed not to occur to him that a permanently viable society could not be built in so artificial a fashion. Thus we find that there is a strong tendency for the leaders to identify themselves with the youth, while estranging themselves from the more experienced mass of older members. Vested interest is involved here, for should the Kibbutz change drastically, many of the present leaders would lose their positions of prestige, but perhaps more significantly, they would be faced with the problem of redefining socialism both in terms of the internal structure of the Kibbutz and with reference to the nation as a whole.

PERHAPS THE CRISIS is best epitomized by what Spiro properly calls "the problem of the women." The dissatisfaction of the women throws into question fundamental Kibbutz assumptions and institutions. When a member leaves the collective, it is usually the opinion of his wife that proves decisive. Involved here is the whole network of communal dining hall, communal child care, minimal privacy, and truncated family life, through which the women have not found the emancipation they envisioned. They have become domestically specialized on a community wide basis, while losing the more diversified skills that a woman usually develops. Above all, perhaps, they miss the emo-

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tional interaction and fulfilling sense of responsibility connected with the rearing of their own children. As Spiro sums up this intricate and pressing problem, "the woman feels frustrated and insecure [in] her maternal and sexual roles, [in addition] to her economic one."

Spiro's most disturbing observation, with which I agree, concerns the general air of disillusionment and frustration pervading Kibbutz life today. In the poignant words of one of his informants, "... above all, we have not succeeded in discovering Man. What we were really looking for was Man."

The author's parting contention is that the survival of the Kibbutz depends upon the degree to which the native-born children feel *motivated* to maintain its unique structure, rather than merely "cognitively" to accept its values. "It is unlikely," he states, "that the [Sabras] are the idealistic rebels their parents were." On the other hand, although the data have not yet been analyzed, "certain aspects of Sabra character are entirely consistent with Kibbutz culture so that, presumably, they would be motivated to perpetuate it."

I would not place the same emphasis on Sabra "motivation" that Spiro does. There are, also, objective elements in the Kibbutz crisis, to which the community may not be able to adjust, while maintaining its traditional form. What does seem crucial with reference to the Sabra is the type of personality structure emerging from the collective method of child rearing. This is an issue of critical importance, not only for the Kibbutz, whether or not its precise form is perpetuated, but also for the light it will certainly cast on the psychodynamics of human growth. When the evidence is all in, it should prove instructive indeed. But meanwhile the Kibbutz as both institution and idea is in deep and permanent crisis.

COMMENTS ON SCIENCE AND SOCIALISM

Ben Halpern

The title I have given my remarks on Mr. Diamond's essay-review on the crisis of the kibbutz movement amounts to a confession that I am going off on a tangent. Some apology should, no doubt, be made for such a bald procedure. Let me make it.

About the crisis of the kibbutz movement, I wrote a rather full account, everything considered, in the Summer, 1949, issue of *Modern Review* (a quarterly then published by the American Labor Conference on International Affairs), supplemented by articles in the *Jewish Frontier* then and later (June 1949, Sept. 1951). While referring to

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my own writings, I refer to a piece entitled "A Problem in Practical Socialism" in the October, 1945 issue of *Jewish Frontier,* discussing the question of hired labor in the kibbutzim and in Histadrut cooperatives at an even earlier stage. Reading these pieces in the light of subsequent events, I find them naive in spots—pardonably so, I hope—but quite as full and concrete on the subject as anything I could cook up for this occasion. Let these references serve as my excuse if I do not enter into a detailed discussion of what is by now a fairly well-known, fully documented, and—for a crisis—surprisingly long-standing "crisis."

The rest of my apology is that I frankly find Mr. Diamond's attitude to the "crisis" more interesting than his analysis of it. It is a rather representative attitude. While it may be a more delicate matter if I attempt a rough analysis of Mr. Diamond's motivational system than if he does the same for the kibbutz, yet perhaps the delicacy of the operation may be overlooked if it gets us into such interesting areas (particularly for DISSENT) as certain current prejudices of social science and perplexities of socialism.

WHAT MR. DIAMOND'S REVIEW does is to place the kibbutz movement in a systematic predicament from which it can have no possible escape except by death or "disintegration." The "crisis" of the kibbutzim, he says, is a "structural" crisis, a built-in crisis *"characteristic of the social form of the Kibbutz itself."* Hence, one is forced to conclude, the kibbutz cannot possibly last.

It should be noted that this conclusion seems to be meant literally. The idea of institutional systems with built-in crises, as in the Marxian analysis of feudalism and capitalism, is familiar enough. When one declares that such systems cannot last, all one means is that they cannot last forever. The whole of history is nothing but the working out of such inevitable debacles. If this were what the built-in crisis of the kibbutz meant, one could imagine its lasting for generations to come.

But what Mr. Diamond wants to stress is the vast difference in significance between the kibbutz and the great and historic although crisis-afflicted institutional systems. Both the "external" and "internal crisis" of the kibbutz, he contends, have come to a head in the same generation that saw it born. When the now aging pioneers in Palestine first built the kibbutz, it was an effective colonizing instrument. Today it is not effective any longer in the face of mass immigration: hence, the external crisis.

Considered as an internal system, the kibbutz arose as an expression of a romantic, cultist, youth-movement-style rebellion against "the Shtetl or its equivalent." The "shtetl" is now unquestionably dead, and nothing proves it so tellingly for the American intellectual as the mild vogue of literary nostalgia for the "shtetl" which has recently been noted. A romantic rebellion against the "shtetl" is, consequently, even worse than dead: it is *passé.* Since, by hypothesis, the kibbutz was

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founded as an expression of such a rebellion and of nothing more, it follows that the kibbutz can have no earthly significance for a modern, living in the 1950's. Even the founders of the kibbutz have themselves grown up and can no longer sustain a social system based on attitudes of post-adolescent rebellion: hence, the internal crisis of the kibbutz.

What remains vague is just what is going to happen when crisis finally succeeds in "dissolving the collective structure" of the kibbutz. Will the members leave? Will they declare that their kibbutz is no longer a kibbutz? Mr. Diamond says nothing specific as to this. We get contradictory prognoses from him, agreeing only in their pessimism. Indeed, his statements are so contradictory and yet so blandly certain of the same conclusion from opposite premises, that one is tempted to apply to Mr. Diamond his own strictures against the kibbutz leaders. His analysis is in a state of crisis, while he fights a desperate rearguard action against the facts, refusing to entertain the possibility that the idea itself may be at fault.

On the one hand, he tells us that "kibbutz institutions operate with unusual rigidity." The leaders will refuse to make even the slightest modifications to adapt to reality. Consequently, one infers they will not attract new immigrants and will die out by attrition. They will not give up their youth-movement collectivism, and accordingly, one infers, will continue to submit both the older members and their own children to conditions such as the human psyche (by hypothesis) cannot tolerate. This, more or less, is also the dogmatic conclusion of a psychoanalyst like Abram Kardiner, to name one example, about the child-rearing practices of the kibbutzim. On the latter point, Mr. Spiro's book (the subject of the review) believes that kibbutz children may grow up so motivated as to be suited for kibbutz living. If this could happen, it would involve changing preconceived notions of Kardiner's and other systems, and Mr. Diamond, one gathers, hardly believes in *this* possibility. But in any case, even if one proved that collective child rearing could somehow produce a "normal" personality capable of living in a kibbutz (in the rigid form within which Mr. Diamond dooms it to remain) it wouldn't save the kibbutz, because anyway the external crisis will finish it off.

On the other hand, we find him saying that the kibbutz may well succumb to circumstances and begin "hiring labor" or making greater allowances for the needs of privacy. But that will get them nowhere with Mr. Diamond. For, he concludes, "They thus cease to exist as kibbutzim."

Either way, they are lost. If they rigidly adhere to romantic and irrelevant principles of collectivism, they will expire because history and psychology are against them. If they accept the dictates of history and psychology and alter their practices, they are lost anyway—because, according to Mr. Diamond's rigid and irrelevant criteria, they will no longer be kibbutzim.

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Now, I am far from wishing to deny that there is a crisis of the kibbutz movement. The kibbutzim themselves are much too concerned about it to let anyone else ignore it. Nor do I suggest that it is pointless to discuss at what point the kibbutz would cease to be a kibbutz and become something else. My own articles dealt concretely with this question. But if there is a crisis in the kibbutzim, it is because of conflicts of principle that the members themselves experience; not because of "inherent contradictions" dreamed up by cultural anthropology and without meaning to the persons involved. If there is a question of defining those modifications which the kibbutz can undergo without ceasing to be the kibbutz, it is because the kibbutzim themselves are troubled by these questions and take them seriously; not because Mr. Diamond will no longer recognize them as kibbutzim if they depart from principles which he describes as not only rigid and mechanical but also as irrelevant and unrealistic.

One may ask, what advantage has a social scientist over anyone else if he has to be guided by what the subject regards as his crisis and his principles, instead of applying a systematic approach of his own which allows him to predict what the subject cannot suspect? As a practitioner myself with a residual sense of professional solidarity, I appreciate the point. But it gets us nowhere if the systematic approach we wish to apply cannot in principle be verified, because it operates on the principle of "Heads I win, tails you lose." This is what Mr. Diamond's approach is guilty of; and this is what places it in a situation of internal crisis.

In the kibbutzim, the leaders—and not only the leaders—resist changes in practices which embody principles with a tenacity that seems disproportionate to anyone who does not share their principles. There is nothing strange about that. Parallel phenomena outside the kibbutz should certainly be familiar to a reflective social scientist, for any layman could easily supply a long list. But Mr. Diamond wants to give this common trait an uncommon systematic significance. Such rigidity, he suggests, is not merely an apologetic stance provisionally taken, but, in the kibbutzim, it is a permanent, fundamental attitude which cannot be compromised without destroying the community. All this because, according to his definition, the community is simply the reflection of a post-adolescent rebellion shared by its members.

Owing to his preconceived diagnosis of a "structural crisis," Mr. Diamond lets us suppose that the kibbutzim actually behave according to his prescriptions. Mostly, he says, they rigidly resist any concessions to the reality about the new immigrants: that the newcomers will not work on kibbutz land, with kibbutz machines, or in kibbutz enterprises except as hired labor. Ergo, most kibbutzim will die out by attrition. A few, however, take on hired hands—and these cease to be kibbutzim. But the fact is that the kibbutzim are not bound by Mr. Diamond's dilemma. They are neither so rigidly doctrinaire as he paints them nor,

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when they adjust to realities, need they do so by such abject submission as he says is their only alternative. To begin with, the idea that the be-all and end-all of kibbutz living is the drowning of privacy in a collective spiritual communion was never the idea of more than a small group of kibbutz members for a relatively brief period. The most characteristic kibbutz group, the Kibbutz Hameuhad, never believed in it. As for the problem of hired labor, more and more kibbutzim have faced the realities of this situation. But none has faced it simply by abandoning principle. Mr. Diamond makes a number of statements about the ownership structure of the kibbutz, and about diverting "surplus value" from hired labor, of which "most kinds ... are cheaper to support than most members," in order to raise the standard of living of members,—particularly an alleged privileged class among them. These statements sound, in a vague way, as if some examination of the cost-accounting records and other economic data regarding the kibbutzim stood behind them. From my own acquaintance with the subject, which admittedly could stand some brushing up, I have the strongest doubt whether this is the case. A thorough examination of these problems would, I am quite certain, lead to a very far-reaching revision of these "conclusions." The most significant part of this story is not mentioned at all by Mr. Diamond: the social inventiveness and principled casuistry which the kibbutzim have employed in order to adapt their ideals to their practical obligations.

So much for the prejudices of science. Now a few words about the perplexities of socialism.

What concerns Mr. Diamond more than anything else in his review is the fear that someone may imagine the kibbutz possesses some significance for a socialist in our times. It is because of this that he denies that the socialist or humanist, Marxian or Freudian theories and the socialist party activities of the kibbutzim have any relation to their structural principles. As for the effect of conditions in Palestine itself, where the kibbutzim served as an effective means of colonization, Mr. Diamond simply waives discussion of this as a possible reality principle built into the kibbutz structure at the very beginning. Thus, the kibbutz becomes nothing but the reflection of neurotic fancies such as appealed to romantic cultists of the rebellion against the "Shtetl or its equivalent."* The conclusion is that a system tied to rebellion against

* It appears that "its equivalent" must mean Jews from industrial and commercial cities or administrative centers like Lodz and Bialystok, Odessa and Warsaw, while the rebellion referred to was a rebellion against such patriarchal elders of Zion as the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, the Bundists and the Sejmists, and other backward agrarian types. As for the psychology of at least some members of the cult (very reminiscent, by the way, of the post-Marxian psychology of some contemporary sophisticates—except that it was resolute, varying from grim to gay, rather than disoriented, varying from doleful to dull), an extreme but telling example of the kind of romantic sentimentality it could produce is this story about a rebel against

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pre-industrial patriarchalism can have no significance for our own industrial era.

The conclusion is not revolutionary nor does it have so devastating an impact as Mr. Diamond seems to imagine. Our own brands of socialism seem to have little significance for the countries of the East (let us forbear to discuss how pregnant with meaning are our socialist philosophies in relation to our own situation), while Eastern socialists who do not wish to go the way of Moscow have regarded the kibbutz and other socialist settlements of Israel as examples from which to learn. In the West, too, the kibbutz became for many socialists of an idealist type a symbol to take heart from. But this is precisely what Mr. Diamond deplores. And as the most crushing denial that any of us should look to the kibbutz for inspiration he refers to "the general air of disillusionment and frustration pervading Kibbutz life today." He quotes one kibbutz member (from Spiro) as saying, "...above all, we have not succeeded in discovering Man. What we were really looking for was Man." And others, from his own data, feel that "... the institutions have revealed the inadequacies of Man, rather than vice versa. As the Kibbutznikim often say, 'The Kibbutz, as a social form, is excellent. It is men who are not worthy.'"

What Mr. Diamond's own socialism is like is perhaps indicated by these observations. It is, first of all, a socialism which seems to see the whole globe as a single system of socio-economic-historical dialectical development. One single solution for one universal crisis seems to be predicated, with no allowance for various solutions responding in the same general spirit (hence, by an ethic not by a science) to differing local situations. It is a socialism, moreover, which, on the one hand, expects institutions to solve all resolvable problems of Man, and to do so by ignoring, apparently, all human problems of an unscientific,—that is to say, ethical, let alone metaphysical—character.

I must conclude briefly, and I fear, dogmatically. The resolvable non-ethical and non-metaphysical problems of men in America today—and generally in the democratic West—probably do not require socialism as their solution, except the "creeping" kind socialists are reluctant to recognize as socialism. In other parts of the world—particularly the ex-colonial world—one or another form of totalitarianism is probably better adapted scientifically for the solution of these problems than is democratic socialism. Both in the West and East, it is only the ethical and, if you will, metaphysical problems of human dignity, human equality, and human liberty that can animate a socialist attitude, and

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the Shtetl of Rome, Italy. When Enzo Sereni came to recruit and train kibbutz members in America in 1935 or thereabouts, he was met at the dock by a premature anti-Stalinist friend of mine. "Tell me," says Sereni, "Is it true that Marxism has begun to enjoy a vogue here?" "Yes," admitted my shocked and startled friend. "Excellent," cried Sereni, "I'm a past master at the Marxist demonstration of Zionism." "So you're a Marxist?" "Who, me? What do you think I am, a boob?"

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in these respects the kibbutz may well serve us as a symbol and perhaps as an example.

It is the inevitable fate of institutions seeking to embody ethical principles to find that Man continues, in the final analysis, to live a life in which exaltation is only occasional, quiet desperation pervasive, and contentedness often a sign of resignation. As the kibbutzim become wise, they find this out; as they remain brave, they do not let it make them renounce their goal.

A REJOINDER

Stanley Diamond

I regret that Mr. Halpern preferred to avoid a direct discussion of the crisis in the Kibbutz. Instead, he saw fit to intuit my "motivational system," socialist attitudes, and professional orientation. On such short acquaintance, this is rather remarkable presumption. It is also, substantially, an argument *ad hominem,* good indoor sport perhaps, but traditionally held disingenuous when serious matters are under consideration. If, however, Mr. Halpern's response helps reveal, even if inadvertently, the difference between the colloquial approach of the partisan-propagandist and the student of society then it will have served a useful purpose. It is Mr. Halpern who has an axe to grind, not I.

This is not to imply that the anthropologist, sociologist, or psychologist lacks commitment. If he is worth his professional salt, he possesses sharp and real commitments, based upon knowledge and competence in his subject. All else, he reserves for his personal opinions. These may be fierce, or diffident, varying with temperament or subject; they may be right or wrong, but the subjective quality of certainty is of a different order. The professional man and the political man are not the same, although the professional man may inform the political man. The professional man may, if he chooses, *be an active political man,* for that matter he may be a religious man, but he is in peril if he permits these opinions to compromise a hard won integrity emerging out of immediate training and experience. This, I think, is true in our time. It may not be true tomorrow, and it is certainly very far from an ideal human condition, but it is the rock we stand on, for many of us a rock of dissent.

While I am at this, I might add that the cultural anthropologist, who bases his work on concrete field experience, including active social

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participation in the community to which he devotes himself, is in or should be in, a favorable position to understand the subtleties inherent in any sort of evaluation. Precisely for this reason, he is at once more reluctant to attempt evaluation, and better equipped to do so than most. Paradoxically, his capacity to do so lies in his *loss of detachment,* and his approach to a truer objectivity. What this means is that the field worker, by identifying himself with the community, works through his emotional distance until he perceives the society as do its members. A crisis then occurs, which all anthropologists experience to one degree or another, and which a few never surmount. The crisis lies in the effort to substitute an experienced-based objectivity for detachment at the sticking point of emotional identification.

But this is only half the job. The other half consists in the obligation to view the community from the "outside," that is, to analyze factors that help shape social structure and function, whether or not the members of the society are aware of them, to match illusion with reality, to measure results against intentions, to identify cause and effect, despite the rationalizations that may be current among the people themselves. This fusion of inner and outer views is, as Redfield and others have stated, the ideal which the field worker sets for himself.

Now one of the things that is quickly learned in this attempt is that what people think they are achieving, or how people verbalize their life situations, is frequently in conflict with what they have, in fact, achieved. Similarly, how they perceive their problems, or state their dissatisfactions, or pose solutions, may be irrelevant to underlying causes, and thus ineffectual with reference to remedial action. Man is, after all, not yet a history making being, in the fully conscious sense that he may one day become. He experiences history, and behaves in accordance with what he perceives to be his interests in particular times and places, but, as Marx stated, he is not yet free of history. I do not mean to imply here that the cultural anthropologist, or any social scientist for that matter, is in any exalted position with regard to the history making potential. But the cultural anthropologist, in particular, is perhaps unusually sensitized to the poignancy and meaning of social conflict in our time by virtue of his concern with both inner and outer views, and their relationship. Another thing that the field worker experiences is that as he penetrates with increasing depth into a particular community, its spatial and temporal boundaries tend to dissolve, until he finds himself confronting a cross-section of the universally human. Paradoxically, this does not negate the value of his findings, but strengthens them, by providing a special instance of what is generally problematic. And this in itself can serve as a backdrop against which cultural assumptions can be seen in relief.

THE ABOVE, then, stated very briefly, are some of the things that a reasonably aware cultural anthropologist tries to do. He does

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not "dream up inherent contradictions without meaning to the persons involved," as Mr. Halpern indicates. He reports, interprets, analyzes, and, where necessary, contrasts inner and outer views, intention and result, cause and effect.

More specifically, I did not place the Kibbutz "in a systematic predicament from which it can have no possible escape except death or disintegration." The crisis flows out of the assumptions, manifest goals, social structure, and position of the Kibbutz community vis à vis the State of Israel. Nor do I suggest that the community will vanish into thin air. The *kind* of community that emerges out of the crisis, and the number of people involved, are the real points at issue, as Mr. Halpern should know, and not the sheer or mere existence of an agricultural settlement. Of course, if one is primarily concerned with the national and military roles of the Kibbutzim, then this consideration will appear of small import, but I stated in my review that it was the *socialist* implications of the Kibbutz that would be discussed, not the widely known and well understood contributions the Kibbutzim made to the development of Israel as a state. These socialist implications are what Mr. Halpern fails to confront in his rejoinder.

But let me work up to that issue by replying to some of Mr. Halpern's specific points. First: The external crisis of the Kibbutzim is not only the result of their failure to absorb new members in significant numbers. There is also the question of dependence on *non-socialist* sources of support. Mr. Halpern remains silent on this issue, although Spiro's informants were not.

Second: The Kibbutz is not simply the result of a rebellion against the Shtetl. The collective form was the product of material conditions in Palestine *and* of an over-reaction against the Shtetl. The over-reaction supplied the elan, but neither factor alone can account for the pioneering viability of the Kibbutz. Each key Kibbutz institution must be understood in this dual perspective. For example, the communal dining hall served a utilitarian function, bound in a network of other institutions, like stones in an arch, but it also served as a channel for over-reaction against the Eastern European Jewish family, with specific reference to eating customs. This point can only be mentioned, since exposition would demand a separate article. Now, the over-reaction, this growth of the Kibbutz as a "counter-Shtetl," perhaps an intense instance of the Zionist motivation to "negate the diaspora," was a specialized and extreme development. Yet it was the source of the self-image of the Kibbutz as the good society, the ultimate collective. Whatever changes are forced upon the community, or whatever changes are voluntarily adopted, either as a result of a shift in material conditions or the waning of the old ardor, are perceived by the members as a retreat from a prior state of "socialist" integrity. Interestingly enough, the Hashomer Hatzair Kibbutzim, generally acknowledged as the most

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politically committed of the Kibbutz groups, are the most tenacious in clinging to the classic Kibbutz pattern.

When Mr. Halpern states therefore that if certain changes occur *I* will no longer recognize the Kibbutz as Kibbutz, he is simply being cute. *It is the members who face the problem,* and it is a profound one, since the classic form not only bore a very heavy emotional freightage, but defined their image of socialism—in many cases, of a socialist Israel. How, then, will they now redefine their socialism with reference to the changing internal structure of the community, and how will they maintain or expand their socialist goals in Israel? Or will the Kibbutz become irrelevant to the development of socialism in Israel? As stated in my review, a familiar result of collective experiments elsewhere is the withering away of socialist interests. If I may hazard a guess about the place which the Kibbutzim may finally take in the history of Israel, I would assume that the national role would be paramount. This is in no way to demean the achievements of the Kibbutz, but such evaluations are of interest to socialists, if irrelevant to Mr. Halpern.

THIRD: I do not imply that the Kibbutz can have no "earthly significance for a modern living in the 1950s." I would hardly have spent 19 months as a participant-observer in a Kibbutz had I thought so. Apart from its real achievements, it has great theoretical significance for all students of society. The Kibbutz is of significance to socialists, since it helps reveal the possibilities and limitations of "over-collectivization," and helps distinguish between rebellion against specific aspects of "bourgeois" background, as personal-psychological phenomena, and more mature radical attitudes. It helps reveal also the fallacy inherent in the technically idealistic reification of the family, money, etc. as, in themselves, sources of social evil.

Fourth: I do not imply that "the leaders will refuse to make even the slightest modification to adapt to reality," or "will not give up their youth movement collectivism." I describe this as an agonizing process, as any Kibbutznick knows. Further, I ask the question, what will happen to their socialism, as they adapt to reality.

Fifth: Mr. Halpern attempts a guilt-by-fancied-association approach by identifying me with 1. orthodox psychoanalysts and 2. totalitarian socialists. This may express his prejudices, which one could sympathize with, but has nothing at all to do with me or what I have written. The socialist identification will be considered below. As for the question of child rearing practices in the Kibbutz, this is a serious question which I, and others, have studied in some detail. The Kibbutzim themselves have recently become deeply concerned with the problem. Obviously, findings cannot be detailed here, since the theoretical implications are significant beyond the Kibbutz itself. But this much can be stated. To be "motivated" for Kibbutz living is not nec-

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essarily to be "suited" for it, as in the case of the pioneer settlers. To be "suited" for Kibbutz living is not necessarily to be deeply motivated for it, as, I suspect, is true for the Sabras. Further, the possibility that Sabras may be "suited" for Kibbutz living would not necessarily mean that they are "normal" personalities, if by "normal" we mean anything beyond the verbalized standards of the particular society. Indeed, "normalization" in the dogmatic and over-reactive Zionist sense of the term seems to have been achieved with the majority of Kibbutz children, but this is a far cry from the image of the "socialist man," ambiguously held by the parents.*

My view, arrived at by research in the Kibbutz, and in no sense associated with any "orthodox psychoanalytic" bias or system, is that the development of a rich affective life, with all its implications for the total behavior of the person and between people, depends on the quality and depth of contact within the immediate family. The family is a socio-psychological cell; the quality of its functioning depends on the character of the larger society. It can function in a primitive culture, in a capitalist, or socialist society. Hence, collective child rearing bears no necessary relationship to socialism, nor, I might add, to the real "emancipation" of women.

Sixth: Whether or not Kibbutz Hameuhad ever believed in the "drowning" of privacy is irrelevant. The Kvutzot, one of which I studied, served as a prototype, with some modification, for all the Kibbutzim. The institutional structures, the daily round of life, in all the collectives is, for most analytic purposes, so similar that minor differences can be ignored.

SEVENTH: Now, with reference to Mr. Halpern's imaginative, and false, reconstruction of what my "socialism is like." I am, certainly, a socialist, also a cultural pluralist, but it is not at all clear to me what Mr. Halpern is, except an angry American Zionist. What he refers to as "creeping" socialism in America is a rapid development to-

* Significantly enough, parents frequently refer to their children as "Goyim." "Normal" Goy and "alienated" Jew are thus juxtaposed. Fully to understand this requires an exploration of the European, particularly Eastern European, Jewish stereotype of the Gentile. Although the reasons for this stereotype are clear enough, it cannot be accepted as accurate, nor can the Zionist stereotype of the Jew be so accepted. The Zionist concept of "normalization," then, as expressed in the living milieu of the Kibbutz, is not, essentially, a creative concept. Rather, by reflecting the putative image of the Gentile, it strives to negate, and is deeply antagonistic to the Jewish consciousness shaped by marginality. Russian and Polish-born parents in the Kibbutz characterize "Goyim" as physically competent and brave, simple, shallow, rather cold (no Yiddish heart), etc., but, above all, "normal," as opposed to the abnormal "alienated" Jew. This approximates their assessment of the Sabras, of whom they are proud, yet from whom they feel somewhat estranged. The important thing is the ambivalence of the pioneer-parents. An objective characterization of the first, transitional generation of Kibbutz Sabras cannot be undertaken here since the whole complex of questions involved with the motives, methods, and functions of collective child rearing is at issue. But it can be noted that the "modal" Kibbutz Sabra is almost the antithesis of the parent generation. The Zionist concept of "normalization," then, is tightly culture-bound in a quite complex and ironic way.

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ward state capitalism. This kind of myopia is a rather heavy price to pay for one's commitments.. His guess that I hold to a world-encompassing "single system of socio-economic-historical-dialectical development" not only misses the mark, but exposes his misunderstanding of so-called scientific socialism. Marx and Engels characteristically deplored such a view.

Also vulgar, but of less importance, is Mr. Halpern's ascription to me of some mechanical faith in the uniform institutional solution of all human problems. This was the illusion of the Kibbutznik; it was and is not my illusion. As I wrote in the review: the Kibbutz tends toward a public exploitation of the personality, rather than its social encouragement,* and this is the result of what may be termed "over-collectivization."

Put another way, the Kibbutz abuses the spirit of cooperation by attempting to embody love institutionally, by insisting, as it were, that people can and must tap new dimensions of moral experience through the mechanical expedient of its group structure. The tyranny of institutions can take many forms, not necessarily as intention, but as result, and this is one of the poignant lessons to be learned from the Kibbutzim, indeed many Kibbutznikim are learning this themselves.

Finally, I would suppose that a minimal definition of socialism consists in the common ownership of the means of production. This is the beginning, not the end, nor is it desirable in and of itself, but only as the launching point for the further cultural exploration and creation of man by man. It is not a blueprint. It is a possible condition for the release of creative energies. With due regard for the achievement of the Kibbutz, I doubt whether it can serve as example for such a socialism. Not only does it fail to achieve the minimal definition of socialism, but its collective structure, in the widest perspective, is a crystallization of tendencies inherent in our culture, unique in this respect, but not the beginning of something new. I would apply the magnificent insight of Martin Buber to the Kibbutz, although he himself might not:

> ... If individualism understands only a part of man, collectivism understands Man only as a part. ... With the former Man's face is distorted, with the latter it is masked. Both views of life ... are essentially the conclusion or expression of the same human condition, only at different stages.
>
> Man in a collective is not man with man. ... That tender surface of personal life which longs for contact with other life is progressively deadened and desensitized. Man's isolation is not overcome here, but overpowered and numbed. ... Modern collectivism is the last barrier raised by Man against a meeting with himself.

This, perhaps, is what Spiro's informant meant when she said, "above all, we have not succeeded in discovering man. What we were really looking for was Man."

* See David Maletz's honest and sensitive novel, *Young Hearts.*

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THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENTION

Bernard Rosenberg

I

Someone, clearly not a press photographer, snapped my picture as I entered the Chateau Gardens on Houston Street and Second Avenue in New York's lower East Side. If I shuddered that Saturday morning, it was not entirely due to the inclement weather. I was scared—and felt rather shabby about being scared. For I had walked into a tawdry caterer's establishment to observe the sixteenth national convention of the American Communist Party. The party's request for space had been turned down by more than sixty proprietors of other New York meeting places, thereby demonstrating that in this city principle counts for more than a fast buck. The Chateau Gardens appeared to be an incongruous place for Communists to gather till one learned that the building was formerly a Russian Orthodox church.

For long stretches of time from the ninth to the twelfth of February, I was the only anti-Communist and non-pacifist in a hall full of four hundred odd Americans. A. J. Muste, Norman Thomas and Roger Baldwin had negotiated for a group of outsiders to attend the first such event in six years. I was part of this group, one among several who feared that the same inference would be made about us that Secretary Dulles had made but a few days before about American correspondents in Red China. It was.

There we sat, the War-Resisters and I (not to mention Stringfellow Barr and two brave representatives from the American Civil Liberties Union) at a special table beside a sort of Intourist guide who smilingly obliged us with his constant presence. Regular newspapermen and even a couple of irregular ones from Tass were excluded, and several of them reviled us for our "privileged" position. We all deplored the CP's policy—this one no more than the rest—but, since everybody else was barred, our being there had some value. Only echoes from the floor could reach an adjoining press room while we heard every incantation with scarcely any strain. If the FBI mistook us for delegates, why, we surely reciprocated in kind.

II

The New Yorker cartoon in which a Communist addresses his fellows as "Comrades and members of the FBI" kept running through my mind. Uniformed and un-uniformed cops swarmed all over the place. Here was a legal political party in which, thanks to Senator Humphrey (that sterling ADA leader) and his Congressional associates, membership is illegal. Fifty delegates were fairly fresh from prison

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where the courts had sent them under the Smith Act. Ninety-five members, outside the leadership, are at present under indictment. And with all that a convention comprising almost 300 delegates and 125 friendly visitors from 35 states, was somehow assembled. No five or more genuinely radical organizations in the United States today could have put on such a show of strength. It was more than a little depressing. As we missed the first name of a speaker, the classical scholar at my side asked me whether I had heard it. "No," I replied, "but I think it's Comrade." "Comrade," he mused, "Same root as *camera*. Means roommate—or *cellmate* in this case." Yes, indeed.

Little symbols tell most of the story. Readers of the *New York Times* probably know that this convention began its sessions not with *The Internationale,* an obsolete anthem, but with *The Star Spangled Banner.* No hammer and sickle graced the wall; instead there was a huge torch with two hands grasping it, under a screaming caption that read "Unity!" Of course, the torch was adopted for emblematic purposes long ago by the Socialist Party to differentiate it from the Communists—but so be it! At no time was the word "capitalist" used above a murmur, and not more than a few times in that low key. The new Communist goal is an "anti-monopoly coalition" that will serve "the workers, the Negro people, and other democratic strata." The last term apparently encompasses youth, women and Family-Sized Farmers (as they are quaintly designated in the language of what a party satirist calls Life-Itself-Manship.) The CP is straining toward a higher synthesis in its program for the de-collectivization of American agriculture, against "the food trust," while it supports the collectivization of agriculture everywhere else.

Was it Sir Roger de Coverly who remarked, "There is much to be said for both sides"? My personal impression of the much-advertised CP faction fight, in which a rigidly Stalinist group led by William Z. Foster was supposed to be battling a "liberal" Communist faction led by John Gates with canny Khrushchevy Eugene Dennis maneuvering in the middle, may be summed up as: "There's nothing to be said for either side." More pointedly: "Bad luck to both of them, whether they continue to close ranks or not." Are they really torn by basic ideological dissension or are tactical differences all that divide "left sectarianism" from "right opportunism?" These dirty words were flung about with cheerful ferocity by the party leaders who spoke at the convention, and every delegate recoiled from one or the other as if they were loathsome manifestations of an even deadlier disease that really *did* invade the premises, namely, bourgeois philistinism.

John Gates, one-time Commissar in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (a job that had its dirty side), and today's leader of the New Communism, yielded to no man at the convention in the warmth of his "party patriotism," a term he used to explain why he voted against his own faction in support of the party's misbegotten line. Is this the man who (we had heard) was supposed to be leading a break out of the totalitarian night and into the daylight of democratic politics? You couldn't have guessed it at the convention. Yet Gates was right: he was exactly the party patriot

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he claimed to be. Wouldn't a traitor have raised the spectre of Hungary, and wasn't he thunderously silent about it? Wouldn't someone deficient in "party patriotism" have asked why Russian troops shot down the workers of Budapest? Two unnamed delegates did try to raise this question: they were quickly squelched as being out of order. One of these delegates, I was told, could count on about six more weeks of party membership.

Jacques Duclos, whose written words on liquidationist revisionism proved so effective in defeating Gates' plan for transforming the party into a "political action association," also told the convention in his historic letter that "the criminals and assassins of the socialist revolution" in Hungary (that is, nine million Hungarians) had to be put down, as they were. Eugene Dennis, who is said by some hagiographers to occupy a middle ground between the two puerile extremes, explained in his keynote speech that "imperialist designs in Hungary" had been thwarted. And Comrade Bill Foster, beloved, enfeebled, hale and hearty, wandering about the hall like a ghost of old crimes, added the last word, "In Hungary, the military action taken ... was imperative" to protect the country against fascism and war. He also noted cogently that *The Daily Worker's* stand, neither condemning nor condoning the Soviet occupation of Hungary (more accurately condemning the first phase *and* condoning the second) was "an incorrect unity formulation." Where were the Gatesites? Busy being Fosterized. Is that too harsh? All right. Busy being Dennisized. How can you tell the difference even with a scorecard?

The leaders conspired to divert attention not only from Hungary but also from the USSR. All of them agreed that their number one task was to reduce the party's isolation in this country. When Gatesites argued for a given course and Foster's Old Guard for another, it was a *fraternal* discussion. One delegate attributed the party's errors—and Comrade Foster wished to be included among those who had committed their share—to "objective conditions." Absolution was available to all who would simultaneously accept the party's total independence and its complete submission to outside control. "Let's not lose our heads, comrades," said one lady who went on to plead that when the party makes a turn, it should move neither to the left nor to the right—which would leave only the stratosphere above or, better, interment in the ground below. Many pointed out that the differences were merely semantic, a view to which, after four interminable days of dreary jargon, I was rapidly persuaded. "We are Marxist-Leninists" (the abridged form of an old label that used to include Uncle Guess who.) So went an impassioned speech, but the question raised by some Gatesites was: Is it necessary to keep *saying* so? Won't the Family-Sized Farmer (breathlessly waiting the latest word from the Chateau Gardens), the Negro people (who seem lately to have been doing well enough without any help from Foster *or* Gates), the workers, the women and the youth, understand us better if we don't use such terms? Nothing more substantive was ever at issue throughout the convention.

How to put things, how to "formulate" slogans—that is, how to find a new Aesopian vocabulary to hide the rotten content of Communism—

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was the real problem. The same delegate who spoke against the "adoration of cliches" studded most of his five-minute talk with nearly every cliche in the book. Another observer, who knew the inner workings better than I did, explained to me that this man was one of those rebellious Gatesites who, as such, needed to use even more jargon than usual (that would come to about 150 per cent) in order not to automatically be classified as an outcast. I could not help being a little appalled, as I sat there, by the significance attached to these terminological disputes in certain sophisticated liberal and socialist circles. Not, I am glad to say, in DISSENT.

The better part of two days was devoted to whether a resolution should put the party on record as one that "interprets" or "creatively applies" the principles of Marxism-Leninism. I put it to you that, outside Moscow and CP headquarters, the scale doesn't exist that can measure the grain of difference between these two phrases. Yet the slim margin by which "interpret" was finally accepted is being widely construed as a victory for the dissidents. Early in the convention, after Gates had stated his reasons for opposing himself ("I subordinate my views to the interests of party unity") he was congratulated for his fighting speech, and the Rebel thereupon exclaimed, "You aint seen nothin'." I understood that to mean, "You never saw a man fold so fast." Yet his supporters could feel the balance tipping in his favor on this matter, too. The party, after all, would remain the party; the convention merely "opposed," it did not forever "reject" a change in name.

But I do not wish to exaggerate: there was one matter of importance taken up at the CP convention. Great stress was laid upon latching onto, or infiltrating, the movement of the Negro people to smash Jim Crow. Ostentatiously, the new National Committee of the party contains a large minority of Negroes. Ostensibly, the party headquarters is to be moved to Chicago in order to get into closer touch with the Negroes. This, it may be, is cause for alarm. Serious damage could be done to the magnificent Negro movement in the South if the Communists managed to twist their way into it—an objective which would please the White Citizen's Councils even more than Ben Davis, Jr. But surely the new and sophisticated leaders of the Negro Resistance will know better than to allow the Communists to come within shouting distance. Be-

Books on Hungarian Revolution:

François Fejtö, *La Tragédie Hongroise,* preface de Jean-Paul Sartre, Editions Pierre Horay, 22 bis, Passage Dauphine, Paris 6 France, 315 pages, December 1956.

National Communism anl Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe, A Section of Documents on Events in Poland and Hungary, February-November 1956; Edited by Paul E. Zinner, Columbia University Press, 2960 Broadway, New York 27, N.Y., 563 pages, paper-covered, $2.95

The Revolt in Hungary, a Documentary Chronology of Events based exclusively on internal broadcasts by central and provincial radios in Hungary, Oct. 23, 1956—Nov. 4, 1956, published by Free Europe Committee, 2 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y., 112 pages, illustrated, $1.00

Peter Fryer, *The Hungarian Tragedy,* published in Great Britain in 1956 by Dobson Books Ltd., London, W. 8—paper-covered, 5 shillings, 96 pages. [See p. 107.]

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cause shouting distance would be just enough to ruin everything.

Well, I don't want to suggest that there are *no* stirrings in the CP; only that the drop in membership—those who vote with their feet—is far more important and encouraging than anything John Gates says in public or whispers in the ear of some credulous fellow-traveller. To be sure, Joseph Clark, Alan Max, John Gates and the men around them would probably like to be free of the more crude forms of dictation from Moscow. No doubt they admire Tito and Gomulka more than Khrushchev, and regard the Russian dictatorship as a "workers' state" *primus inter pares.* I commend to them the public utterance of a writer finally restored to sanity, I. F. Stone, who when told at a symposium the other day that Soviet Russia, with all its faults, was still a child of the revolution, answered: "Child of the revolution? All right. But if a child has two heads and four legs, after a while you decide he's a monster."

Will the Gatesites discover that totalitarianism is a monster? If they ever do, it is not likely to be from under cover of an organization committed to one or another brand of totalitarianism. Many American Communists *were* shaken by the recent revelations of Soviet despotism and by the murder of the Hungarian revolution; but these are no longer Communists. Most of them have quietly departed from their old haunts. Many of them—not those who glibly made speeches at the Chateau Gardens for *any* of the factions—must be sitting in their rooms, staring at the wall and asking themselves, "What have I done? How was it possible?"

John Steuben, an old party leader who really broke, recently said from his sick-bed, *"I want to live the rest of my life in agony and silence."* He and not Tito or Gomulka or Togliatti or John Gates, should be the model for the shaken and troubled Communists. Not that they need forever live in silence; I do not believe in creating a caste of pariahs. But first a little self-examination, a little remorse, a little shame. Of these cleansing responses almost nothing could be heard at the Chateau Gardens. But the death rattle of an impotent party was discernible. For this we can all rejoice.

So our readers [and writers] will understand: Though we have added 16 pages to the size of this issue, we have still had to omit a number of interesting articles, reviews, letters and miscellaneous pieces. We ask our correspondents to be patient; their letters will appear in time. Our next issue will be on exceptionally interesting one, devoted to "Aspects of American Life." We can't list all the articles here. But, since our current book section has had to be condensed, we promise: Bernard Rosenberg's article-review of "Hiroshima Diary" ("Is This Our Life?"), Henri Rabassiere's challenging discussion of "Work and Its Discontents" (Daniel Bell) and "The Young Worker of Today" (Karl Bednarik), and Emanuel Geltman's review of a vital book, "Union Democracy" (Seymour Martin Lipset, *et al*). Our "Communication" Department will also be lively. (And there is a lot you won't want to miss in future issues. Subscribe now, and receive all our issues!)

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HUNGARY AND THE FAILURE OF THE LEFT*

Michael Walzer

Events in Hungary, *The Manchester Guardian* has written, have "slightly weakened the Communists, without rallying the non-Communist left." The words were intended to describe the French political scene, where the cry "Algeria!" greets any socialist attempt to express sympathy with the Hungarian workers. They seem no less true of England, and that despite the innocence of the Labor Party with regard to Suez and Cyprus, and despite the persistent effort here to define and articulate a "socialist foreign policy." For that effort has met with far greater success in facing a receding imperium than in confronting contemporary Europe. In the latter case the effects of the cold war polarity have been all too obvious. The new force to which the Hungarian people—so briefly and bravely—gave testimony has never entered into British calculations.

Those Laborites who have "responsibly" accepted the "necessity" of a garrisoned West greeted the Hungarian revolution simply as another cold war victory. Still it must be said that in the organization of protest meetings and the collection of funds they far outdistanced their more leftward brothers. Among the latter—so many of whom have rejected one side in the cold war only to attempt a difficult half-embrace in the other—reactions have been more varied. For these "leftists" the events of October and November have been a constant source of astonishment ("the Russian action ... is very nearly incomprehensible"), of embarrassment ("the Hungarian regime under Rakosi was evidently a most unpleasant state of tyranny"), and of mental torment ("... recent events in Hungary face left-wing Socialists with an appallingly difficult problem of judgment."†) But even when these reactions were accompanied by sorrow at the "tragedy," or indignation at the repression, they hardly seem an adequate response to the men of Budapest. Why this is so is a question we must attempt to answer.

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* I should say that this report deals not with the bulk of the British labor movement, but with a group of "left" intellectuals who in England play a role more prominent than their numbers might suggest. [See also "Communications," page 202. Ed.]

† The three quotes are from the *New Statesman and Nation;* the latter two from G. D. H. Cole's article "Reflections on Hungary," Jan. 12, 1957.

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I

The acceptance of Russian Communism into the world of Western Social-Democracy has been one of the more astonishing achievements of a certain kind of practical English mind—or at any rate of one example of that mind: *The New Statesman and Nation.* Its reasoning is simple. Russia exists (surely) and her government calls itself socialist. It was established by a socialist revolution and proceeded to nationalize the means of production. It has created a welfare state far surpassing that set up in England during the Attlee years. And so on. But the final condition for the success of the *New Statesman*'s effort at comprehension has been—it is usually so—a sacrifice of principle: "That much has been done sadly amiss in the Soviet Union I entirely agree," G. D. H. Cole wrote in the July 7th, 1956 issue, "but it is surely nonsense to suggest that the Soviet worker does not enjoy in most matters—for example in educational and social opportunity—an immensely enlarged freedom, *which does not lose its value because it does not extend to politics*—however deplorable such a restriction may be." (Emphasis added.)

But the effect of Cole's reasoning has been to make that restriction less and less deplorable. There he seems to argue not only that political "restrictions" do not affect other areas of human life, but also that the restrictions amount to little more than the absence of a parliamentary system. Hence Cole finds himself unable to place the Russians "beyond the pale, or to refuse to admit that they had valid reasons for not following the parliamentary democratic way." And this leads him—as if by consequence—to a typical *New Statesman* conclusion: Socialists "must get ready to hold out the hand of friendship to men with whom, despite all their difference, they do have a great deal in common."

Since the Twentieth Congress this attitude has taken the definite form of attempts to re-establish "conversation" between socialists and Communists. Despite the difficulties of the cold war, argued the *New Statesman*'s lead article of June 23, 1956—a week before Poznan—the two groups ought to remain on speaking terms. (Is it merely the cold war which keeps them apart?) The image invoked was that of Nenni and Togliatti, and the reason suggested was the "positive role which Socialists can play in breaking up the Communist monolith." This "positive role" is apparently *not* one of opposition to the totalitarian monolith and its supporters; rather it seems an offer of guidance along a path of "gradual transition to democracy." But what is the socialist's role to be when the "gradual transition" breaks down, when an armed demonstration occurs in Poznan, or a revolution in Budapest? Is there not a strong possibility that socialists, frozen to their "positive role," would then strive to prevent the monolith, corrupt in all its parts, from collapsing too quickly upon the heads of its erstwhile creators? Any sort of apologetic connection with the monolith seems to hold this danger.

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The problem must be approached from another angle also. Equipped with their ready acknowledgment of, and their understanding for, "socialist" Russia, these British leftists have proceeded to a solution of European problems which is again a tribute to the Practical Mind. They have argued for a negotiated *détente* between East and West, accompanied by a simple division of the continent into spheres of influence so firmly recognized as not to require defense (with Germany neutralized, since it could belong to neither sphere without ruining the *détente*). That is to say simply that America would recognize Russia's dominant interest in Eastern Europe, and Russia America's in the West. As for the people within each sphere—they would have the undoubted benefits of peace and reduced armament.

Whatever the merits of this solution—and it has many—it would obviously be upset by the appearance in Eastern Europe of governments upon which Russia could not depend. In effect the plan not only ignores the possibility of a "third force" in Europe, similar to that which has grown up in Asia, but it depends upon the failure of such a development. Or rather, with regard to Eastern Europe, it depends upon holding any "third force" movement within very precise limits, limits which could only be drawn by Moscow's benevolence. British socialist leaders have persistently urged the neutralization of Germany in order to encourage this benevolence, to relax "Russian fears of European hostility," so that Russian leaders would be readier to "permit an increasing measure of independence to the states of Eastern Europe." (Aneurin Bevan, *Tribune,* Nov. 26, 1956.) But the reverse of this encouragement to relaxation must be discouragement to revolution.

When the first revolutionary demonstration came—at Poznan— these leftists in Britain tried uncomfortably to accept *both* of the explanations which immediately were offered: "foreign intervention" and a "determination to win . . . greater freedom." The workers of Poznan, Aneurin Bevan wrote in the left socialist weekly *Tribune,* "must have been brought to a frenzy of desperation . . ." Yet he did not feel at one with them. "Those who seized upon the admitted grievances of the workers of Poland were not concerned with the privation of the workers . . . It is a lamentable fact that the rising of Poznan comes at a time when there is real prospect of an improvement of conditions throughout the Soviet world." But that prospect—undoubtedly real—lay precisely *with* the workers of Poznan. Bevan was here playing the *New Statesman*'s "positive role."

It was, at any rate, a well-documented choice. The large number of socialist intellectuals and journalists traveling in Eastern Europe during the spring and summer of last year anticipated only the "normal," i.e., guided and controlled, process of "democratization." They gave no hint of, because they were blind to, the violence to come. R. H. S. Crossman, having just returned from Poland, insisted in the

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May 5, 1956 *New Statesman,* that opinion there was neither anti-Russian nor anti-Communist! Intellectuals, he wrote, "who staked everything on the Russian alliance now feel that their faith in the Soviet Union has been miraculously justified" [i.e., by the Twentieth Congress]. Similarly John Freeman reported an interview with local party leaders in Budapest (*NS&N,* July 7, 1956). He did not doubt, he wrote, the truth of their statements that workers felt "respect for Rakosi and solidarity with the central leadership." He ventured to think, however, that Khrushchev's speech might make it more difficult to secure party discipline.

II

An advertisement appearing in a leading Warsaw newspaper last December—so the story goes—offered to "exchange practically new independence for better geographical position." The Poles could afford the irony. They had done, *The New Statesman* wrote, splendidly: "The change of administration was carefully planned, skillfully and bravely carried out. The public knew what was happening and at no stage did their feelings get out of hand." Bevan in *Tribune* thought so too. The news from Poland could scarcely be better, he wrote on October 26th: "Destalinization is taking its natural course." But the irony of the Polish advertisement would have been lost on him. His opinion is worth quoting at length:

> ... it would be a serious mistake to regard events in Poland as evidence of the disintegration of the Soviet European bloc. Communism is too firmly established and the influence of Russia too great to allow that to happen. Nor does it follow that the long term interests of all of us would be served by such disintegration ... No friend of Poland would attempt to encourage her to do more than assert her own way in friendship with the Soviet Union ...

No wonder that the British left was almost as frightened by the collapse of Communism in Hungary as the Communists were. The new authorities in Budapest, *Tribune* wrote on Oct. 26th, "must make strenuous efforts to re-establish order."

It cannot be said that the editors of *The New Statesman* (far less those of *Tribune*) do not know the character of the Russian empire, or at any rate, that they did not quickly learn that much of the Hungarian lesson. When they were able the following week to report, not savage repression, but sudden and exhilarating victory, they did so happily. "The Poles by their nerve in council, the Hungarians, by their courage in battle, have won the right to talk to Russia on equal terms." And they were even willing to see more than this rather frightening "equality": "The flame of liberty, once the inspiration of Communists and the terror of reactionary regimes, today threatens the empire the Communists have built." It appeared at last that the *Statesman's* polite understanding of Russian achievements and problems was at an end.

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Yet its moral indignation a week later at the Russian intervention only served to hide a lack of genuine sympathy with the Hungarian revolution. Here was "unnatural" destalinization, heroic and doomed; two qualities making only for tragedy. It was as if the whole thing had been a sad mistake—and just when all had been going so well! Britishers seem to have disliked precisely those elements of the Hungarian revolution which made it a *revolution*: the collapse of the previously established government, and the confusion and disorder which inevitably followed: the "losing of control," and "the feelings out of hand." But G. D. H. Cole's summing up for the *New Statesman* (Jan. 12th, 1957) represents more than this distate. It marks a return to the pre-Hungary *New Statesman* position, which combined a running apologetic for Russian imperialism with an attempt to play the game of *realpolitik*.

Cole's article coupled a denunciation of the Russian repression with a practical justification of the same act. The first was the easiest: "it is morally wrong to impose a regime by external force." But as it turns out the second is more relevant, for it allows us to see precisely what many British leftists found objectionable about Hungary.

No sooner had the revolution begun, Cole wrote, than "certain reactionary elements . . . thought they saw their chance of turning it to their own ends." The workers' council were "local and uncoordinated, and there was behind them no unifying force armed with a clearly conceived plan of action." In this confusion there was opportunity for many discontented groups to set up local and provisional governments of their own. Some of these were "no doubt inspired by high ideals of freedom and democracy, but others appear to have been almost openly Fascist and determined to undo the entire revolution that had dethroned the previously dominant power . . ." The Nagy government never got off the ground; it was never recognized by the main bodies of insurgents. "Sheer chaos thus threatened the country, and it is not possible to say what would have happened had not the Soviet Union, after once evacuating Budapest, sent back its tanks and lent its backing to the attempt to construct a new Communist government under the leadership of Janos Kadar." Had the Russians stood aside, Cole went on, he could not think that "the Hungarian people would have been in a position freely and democratically to decide their own destiny." And why? Because free elections were not a practical possibility!

III

The Hungarian revolution was pre-judged a "tragedy" before it had half begun. If only it could have followed the path that Gomulka had set! If only Russia would democratize gradually yet never lose control! If only Marie Antoinette had been sweeter, and her husband less a fool! History does not stay with the happily arranged

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patterns: the Hungarians broke out of the cold war pattern because they found it insufferable. Who can tell them now that they should have worked within it, effected a "gradual transition" to something or other? The one thing their revolution did not deserve was to have been mourned before it was celebrated.

It was, one socialist said, the inevitable reaction of impotence. Yet during the same weeks British socialists seized upon Eden's Egyptian war as an issue which they could fight. They printed leaflets, held protest meetings, organized marches in London. Throughout the country they were aroused to action. The university towns were centers of anti-government agitation. Working class rallies were held throughout London and a gigantic mass meeting in Trafalgar Square. But Hungary brought nothing remotely similar. Was sorrow the full extent of socialist duty toward the street fighters of Budapest? Was there nothing to be done?

The first thing that was surely required was the simple act of recognition. More than an announcement of sympathy and support, this should have been the affirmation of a common faith. It was thus that *Tribune* paid tribute to the "glory" of Hungary: "The brain, after all, cannot be invaded. The spirit cannot be subdued. 1984 will never happen." And once that faith has been commonly affirmed, vacillations amidst disorder and "tragedy" must be boldly challenged. "It would be an insult to the Hungarian people," *Tribune* wrote, "to suggest that they cannot deal in conditions of freedom and the open clash of ideas, with reactionaries, as they are dealing with Stalinists . . ." But not enough British leftists nor even some of its own people spoke as clearly as, in this instance, *Tribune*.

Such an act of recognition is by no means an insignificant socialist duty. It requires the existence of a moral basis to socialism. And it is the only foundation upon which a new program for socialist activity in Europe might be built. For by recognizing in Hungary the image of *international* socialism, of anti-cold war socialism, might Western socialists not have found it again in themselves? If the Socialist International, freeing itself at last from NATO, had called immediately to fellow socialists in Asia and Africa, might they not at least have called into question their national impotence? Hungary was a "tragedy" because it challenged the somber reality of cold war politics. Socialists who recognized the value of the challenge ought to have launched a vigorous campaign to break up the NATO-Warsaw Pact tension and free all Europe from the coercion which it implies. For a big power agreement, under present conditions, is unlikely to be more than a freezing of the cold war. And such a freezing would leave future Hungaries to their fate. Insofar as it agrees to this, Western socialism demonstrates its own moral failure. The Hungarian revolution was a demand for an alternative to the cold war. To find that alternative ought to be a socialist task.

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BAD CONSCIENCE TO BUDAPEST COMPLEX

Jean-Francois Chabrun

During a press conference held last January by the Hungarian writer Ignotus, a French surrealist poet (politically Marxist but anti-Stalinist) asked him what was the theoretical platform of the Workers' Councils during the October uprising. It seemed that he needed this information in order to know how to interpret the Hungarian events.

Some people tried to make him understand that these Workers' Councils, busy fighting the Soviet tanks, had other worries than working out a "theoretical platform."

But in vain: he failed to understand. For the majority of "leftist" French intellectuals, revolutions are made by Proletarian Supermen who symbolize, in the abstract and forever, Mankind marching toward progress. And during the insurrection, this Proletarian must of necessity carry a machine gun in his right hand, and in his left Karl Marx's Complete Works, so that he may consult them at any moment and thus make sure that he is shooting in the direction preordained by History.

For all its naivete and primitivism, this imagery arises from a deep need of our intellect: to establish a logic of liberty and then to concretize it through our acts.

Saint-Just, the first great "active theoretician" of the revolution, asserted two hundred years ago that there could not exist a really free nation as long as slave nations existed elsewhere in the world. In saying this he advanced the first postulate of a universal logic of liberty. Today French intellectuals on the left have developed this postulate into the notion that no true freedom of thought is possible as long as a whole social group, in this case the working class, is reduced to a state of misery, hence of servitude and alienation which, basically, is the modern form of slavery.

This is why the Communist Party used to fascinate them so (and to a certain degree still does). In addition, the Party organization, supported by an empire which now reaches from the Indian boundary to a few hundred miles from Paris, has at its disposal means of propaganda and persuasion such as have never been held by any other power in the history of the world.

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THE COARSENESS of the Communist Party's reasoning, the contradictions so often implied in its slogans, are made up for by the frequency of their repetition, by incessant and redundant advertising. Deafened and besotted by this ever-lasting noise, a certain number of French intellectuals came eventually to accept this *leitmotif*: "The Communist Party is the only one which effectively defends the working class. Hence, whosoever attacks Russia and Communism, even if he is technically right, is wrong in substance. All he actually does is retard the emancipation of the working class which, like the development of human intelligence, takes place in a historically necessary revolution."

In this way, gradually, without even being aware of it, the French intellectuals affected by Communism substituted for a logical postulate a dogmatic imperative: "We hold that freedom of the mind hinges on the liberation of the working class; this liberation depends upon the Communist Party which has taken charge of it. Hence, we are for the Communist Party, or at least we must facilitate its work by not fighting it."

For long years they abandoned the rational notion of "proof" and thus paid the price for an amazing regression into pragmatic dogmatism. They gladly admitted that if you want liberty you first have to suppress it.

This made all problems simple. When you asked a Communist intellectual what he thought of the Moscow trials, the concentration camps, the massive deportations in the USSR, or of those victims the Communists hanged and who now, dead, are made to revoke confessions they made while alive—under this questioning the Communist intellectual would be a bit embarrassed; annoyed that he had to deal with an interviewer of such small understanding; even pained. "For after all," he would think, "you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs . . ."

Yet this same intellectual knew that he could not live six months under the regime he wished to see established. But there another motive enters: "bad conscience."

NINETY-NINE PER CENT of the Communist intellectuals are of "bourgeois" origin and owe everything to the culture of a society they would want to see destroyed. They are trapped in a futile struggle between the habits they acquired and the duties they chose. On the one hand they cannot oppose the foundations of their own cultures without betraying it. On the other hand, all they can offer the new society is this "rotten culture" of theirs, precisely the culture they feel ought to be extinguished.

This bad conscience manifests itself in symptoms of aggression. On the moral-political plane, that means a systematically sectarian or cynical attitude. The motives of such a sectarianism or cynicism do not

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derive from political economy but from psychopathology; hence, they are not rational. That is why, despite the Rajk trial, the gunfire in East Berlin and the publication of Khrushchev's report, the problem of the intellectuals' bad conscience could not be resolved and to this moment has still been playing into the hands of the Communist Party.

The publication of Khrushchev's report did, to be sure, evoke deep anxiety among the French Communist intellectuals. But it was still a family affair. As in any inheritance case, there was some trouble, uneasiness and suspicion in settling accounts. But the very basis of the system which left so troublesome a heritage was not yet called into doubt. But then, suddenly, the Poznan events and the Hungarian uprising appeared to disturb the familiar concepts. For the first time, a whole people rose against the "socialism" of Russia and against the masters it forced upon them. Moreover, it had been the appeals of the writers that led the Budapest workers to charge Soviet tanks.

Except for some rare "specialist" in anti-Soviet Marxism who felt suspicious and vexed because the others came around to his point of view without giving him credit, most intellectuals felt the impact of the new developments like an electric shock and all at once were suddenly freed from the bad conscience from which they had been suffering. It now became possible to side with the workers without automatically putting up with the monstrous caprices of a party that pretended to be their sole champion.

Those Parisian intellectuals who up to then had sounded apologetic for not quite having the courage to be Communists raised their heads and declared they were proud of never having been Communists. Those who still are, from habit or cowardice, have ceased boasting about it. There are others who publicly broke with their old party. When the Marxoid-existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, on the day following the Budapest events, condemned the Communists in *L'Express,* this weekly was completely sold out within 48 hours.

IN SHORT, we are witnessing the great spring thaw of the French intelligentsia after the long Stalinist winter. With one blow, bad conscience has been supplanted by the Budapest complex. The latter has the advantage of being more positive than the former. People no longer laugh in your face when in a high-minded salon or at a union meeting you mention the possibility of a humanitarian socialism which, to build a new society, would not need to resort to the archaic procedures of dictatorship, even dictatorship of the proletariat.

The intelligentsia breathes more easily. It won't necessarily have to toss overboard what it had acquired. For again it can visualize the progress of history as a harmoniously continuous curve. And no longer will it have to spit on Spinoza to make Lysenko's grains grow.

This euphoric tidal wave meets only with feeble resistance from the few intellectuals who have remained faithful to the Communist

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Party: their turn now to suffer from bad conscience—all the worse since in the factories more and more workers refuse to vote for Communist delegates and the rank and file militants don't renew their membership cards.

The black springtime of international Stalinism was born at Barcelona, the day Franco's tanks silenced a whole people. The spring of modern socialism has perhaps been born at Budapest, the day Soviet tanks fired at a people they claimed to have liberated.

At the origin of great movements of ideas and opinions we always find a defeated revolution; the logic of despair joins the logic of liberty, for better or worse.

Of course a danger would arise if Communism's loss of momentum should help reactionary forces, rather than the socialist left—if the socialists were taken unawares by the swiftness of events and still had to search for their bearings.

But whatever may happen, one thing is certain: for the intellectuals as well as for a large part of the West European working class, the spell of Soviet-inspired Communism today is broken. In Marxist terms, one of those "qualitative leaps" on which history never goes back has taken place.

Translated by HEDWIG PECHTER

In the Spring 1957 issue of

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THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE MASS

Nicola Chiaromonte

If it is true that we live in a mass society, we must immediately admit one fact: there are some individuals who are more affected by it than others, but there are not, nor can there be, privileged persons. There cannot be, on the one hand, the anonymous and vulgar mass which lacks idealistic motives, and on the other a few individuals who succeed in keeping intact their nobility and the cult of the highest values. The mass and the few are inextricably mixed. At certain times we feel ourselves to be *individuals* endowed with feelings, needs, and spiritual demands which are not those of the anonymous crowd. And we speak of the mass situation in so far as we experience the confusion between, and the mutual involvement of, the anonymous and the personal. We feel a contrast between our individual beings and a social situation in which necessity, automatism, and collective servitude are especially refractory both to the individual's personal demands and to the "aristocratic values" which (at least at times) the individual seeks and by which he sometimes feels himself inspired.

What is a "mass situation"? Simplifying greatly, one can say that it is a social situation in which the experience of collective necessity is very strong. Before developing his famous analysis of the "revolt of the masses" Ortega y Gasset "places" the phenomenon of the "mass" by drawing the reader's attention to what he calls a "visual experience" —"the fact of agglomeration, of plenitude . . . The cities are full of inhabitants, the houses full of tenants, the hotels full of guests, the cafes full of customers, the parks full of strolling people, the waiting rooms of famous doctors full of patients, the theaters full of spectators, and the beaches full of bathers."

"What previously was, in general, no problem, now begins to be an everyday one, namely to *find room,*" he observes. Now, if he had dwelt upon this experience of agglomeration, of the crowd, of *not finding room,* he would perhaps have led us to the heart of the "mass situation."

Even if we treat it in his terms, as extremely simple and commonplace, this experience is not, in the first place, purely "visual": it is also spiritual. It signifies for us the *essential* way in which the individual comes in contact with the life of others—or rather, of *everybody.* This becomes clear once we recognize it as a fact in the life of the individual consciousness, rather than as an external fact.

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Not finding room is an agonizing experience. It means to feel oneself shut out, or at least to risk that; the others are already there, they occupy all, or almost all, the available space. To find room, an effort is necessary; one is obliged to make room for oneself. The struggle is not a struggle for life in general; on an astoundingly humble level, we must fight to occupy the little space which we need, which in some sense belongs to us, since we have the same right to it as others do. But no one guarantees it to us, apparently, since the simple presence of others in a crowd obstructs and prevents it. And it is also clear that the others have the same right as we do.

This experience does not occur merely on certain intermittent and rare occasions. It is regularly repeated in hundreds of instances, whenever, in fact, we come into contact with collective existence, instead of remaining in the circle of private relations between individuals. It is an absolutely typical and fundamental experience, more fundamental than the situations themselves in which we undergo it (work, search for material necessities, relations with bureaucratic machinery, participation in political life, amusements)—since one repeats substantially the same experience in each one of these instances.

Nor is this a purely physical fact (and even less is it completely "visual") concerning space and material necessities. It is enough to say, "finding room becomes a problem" to become aware that this implies a spiritual situation, and, precisely, a situation of preliminary hostility towards the others, those who take up the space and threaten not to let us have even the indispensable minimum of it. This hostility, on the other hand, is immediately contradicted by the evident fact that the others are not there to keep us from being ourselves, but because they are looking for what we are looking, and are equally hindered and impeded by the crowd. This hostility, then, is unreasonable and has no right to show itself. But to recognize this does not wipe out the feeling any more than it calms the anxiety to "find room": it only represses and muffles the feeling, which continues to lie, intact, at the bottom.

Furthermore, the experience of the crowd is not freely chosen. One is in a crowd on the street, on public conveyances, in a movie, in a stadium, not because one has decided to mix with the crowd, but because one cannot help it. One cannot avoid submitting to the numerous bondages of organization and bureaucracy which life in common imposes; one cannot escape even during leisure.

The situation which follows from this concerns everyone, the most refined intellectual as well as the most humble worker. Not even the economically privileged individual escapes. The way in which he enjoys his advantages depends, in fact, on the way in which others must seek to satisfy their needs.

ACTUALLY, it is always possible to avoid to some extent the

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material bondage imposed by collective life. But one cannot escape the predicament of collective living in its spiritual aspect.

Daily participation in "mass" life can seem occasional and transient—limited to certain moments and therefore analogous to the automatic way in which we obey the needs of the body. (Equating the needs of the body and relations with our fellows is in itself a serious fact!) But in any event, if instead of looking at these moments from the outside, as unimportant intervals of time, we try to think of them from the inside, as moments of life and of consciousness, these, let us say, passive moments will no longer seem so indifferent.

Immersed in the crowd, the individual feels himself a unit among many interchangeable units. And this, if you think about it, is already the beginning of a dissociation which does not stop here. In his family and the circle of his friends and acquaintances, the individual never feels himself a mere unit. Besides, it is all very well to think that once having left the crowd, one regains all one's individuality, whole and differentiated. But in the meanwhile, one has been aware of an elementary identity with the others which overcomes and wipes out every personal difference as well as every shade of individual thought.

It therefore seems legitimate to inquire whether he who leaves the crowd after feeling himself confused in it is, in truth, the same individual as before; whether he has the same ideas of himself and of his own ineffable quality as he had; whether indeed he has the right to retain such an idea and whether, by being too sure of it, he does not risk forming an idea of himself which is too favorable, too vaporous and idealistic.

This inquiry may seem idle. But when we reason as if the indistinct communication with others, imposed on us by our daily life, injures in no way our individuality or the quality of our "values," our reasoning implies an assumption which is not so simple: that those moments have no importance, are moments effectively indifferent. The trouble is that a great enough number of unimportant moments and indifferent acts gives us the precise image of the perfect *mass-man*—the man whose existence has a minimum of importance and who passively submits to this fact without even recognizing it.

Even on occasions of little weight (like those given as examples), the experience of the crowd is not limited to the feeling of anonymity. Indeed, to be precise, it is not we who feel anonymous in the crowd, it is the others who are anonymous to us. However, we know that the same thing happens to us in the eyes of others. In reality, no one is anonymous, but we all find ourselves in a situation of anonymity. It is because of this fact (given the very ordinary necessity which has brought us together) that we can speak of ourselves as all equal, as units that are undifferentiated and interchangeable.

My relations with my neighbor then assume a rather peculiar quality: the person next to me is a stranger and, at the same time, reflects at every point my own condition. Thus reflected by him, my condi-

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tion is not the "human condition" in general, my "nature" is not the human nature of the novelists and philosophers, but, so to speak, *what is left over of it.* In that situation, I am reduced to the minimum and I know it—just as I know that a panic in the crowd would be enough to crush me.

II

One outlines in this fashion a rather wretched image of individual destiny; and one also begins to perceive what is effectively the relation between a mass situation and aristocratic values—a relation of externality and suspension.

This appears clearly enough when one realizes that communication between individuals in a crowd is reduced to conventional signs, or, in any event, to a very impoverished language. It is not that I cannot have a conversation with the next fellow. But it is as if I do not know him; as if I have in common with him only a humanity which is both very much reduced and rather general; as if, in addition, I know that my relation with him is purely occasional and transient. It is evident that there is no room for a genuine exchange of feelings and thoughts between us. One could indeed say that, given the situation in which we find ourselves, we can communicate only by remaining external to each other as much as possible. We can exchange only the most conventional words. The expression of complex ideas, subtle evaluations, the communication of delicate feelings must evidently be left for other occasions.

Ever since great cities have come into existence, we have been familiar with the image of next-door neighbors who meet every day without ever knowing each other, with the singular freedom and the grave solitude involved therein. The meaningless conversations consisting of commonplaces which people exchange when they meet have already been the subject of irony. We have a picture of human relations reduced to elementary proportions, to the point where their value is negative.

Similar images have been considered comic when opposed to the ideal fullness of authentic human expressions among beings who love each other or who have an ideal in common, a noble interest, a heroic destiny. We have naturally assumed that, while on the one hand there was the common people (the "mass") which got more and more common, there remained on the other hand, in some circles or privileged classes (the youth, or the people, or the proletariat, or even the elite) the cult of authentic feelings and of "aristocratic values"—a human "nature" more or less intact.

We did not ask ourselves if that were possible: if one could in fact imagine a society in which spiritually privileged individuals (or groups, or classes) could exist with others who were subjected to an obscure commonness, without the quality of the one being influenced by the material and spiritual way of life of the others.

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To think in this way was both grossly materialistic and irredeemably idealistic—materialistic because it was imagined that in a society relations between individuals could remain purely external, physical, economic, material; idealistic because it assumed the existence (at the bottom and on the fringes of the common conditions of existence) of a soul, a consciousness, that was impervious to the quality of the relations which could be established between individuals who live together in a determined social situation.

GIVEN THE EXISTENCE on the fringes of the crowd, of an elite (or of a chosen class) what will be the relations between them? What, in other words, will be their common language? At the very least it will be a mixture of the selected and of the vulgar. In which case, the spiritual privilege of the elite has already been rather trimmed down. One can, of course, make the hypothesis of a radical withdrawal of the elite from the mass; or assert that, in the last analysis, the only possible relation between the two is that of violence. But the question of language will not be clarified. How will the elite make itself understood without adapting its language (that is, its values) to the mass?

The example used here, of the situation of the individual in a crowd, may seem frivolous. It only concerns, in fact, the most obvious aspect of the "mass situation."

One must, however, keep two things in mind. The first is that the nature of a society consists wholly in the manner of being together which it offers to the individuals who compose it—the way in which they *can* experience that fundamental bond which Aristotle calls *philia*. If in the society in which we live mass conditions and mass relationships predominate, this cannot fail to affect our vision of the world and of human relations; and thereby, the efficacy of aristocratic values in collective life.

In the second place, it is evident that the mass situation is not limited to daily and occasional relations of the individual with the crowd. The crowd is neither a prime fact nor an occasional phenomenon: it is the ultimate form, the form most evident and striking, of other facts that are more weighty and serious.

Still, when these general facts are enumerated in the usual way—working conditions, relations between the individual and the State, forms of technical and economic organization—one will still not have an image of the situation as it takes shape in the individual consciousness.

The collective demands from which the phenomenon of the "mass" is born are all prosaic: so prosaic that they appear indisputable and indisputably rational. It is an elementary rationality, which has the quality both of natural necessity and constriction from above. Thus, keeping to the obvious, it is natural and inevitable that, in the crowd on a subway, everyone has his share of discomfort. But no one, except

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perhaps technical specialists, could say whether that was inevitable in an absolute sense or "just"—whether one could not do something better. Indeed, since it is a question of material conditions, the "better" will always seem possible, but also doubtful, since the way of obtaining the "better" remains obscure. In daily experience, the mass situation is presented as an accomplished fact, that is neither just nor unjust; it is simply there. Its modes depend, of course, on the ability and good will of those in charge. But intrinsic in the very form of collective life is "necessity."

To live in a mass society means to automatically perform acts that are not free; doing what one does, not because it is natural, and not even because one considers it positively useful, but because one wishes to avoid the complications and bad results which would come (to oneself *and* to others) from acting differently. For the single individual this can be more or less painful. That is, the advantages which one derives from yielding to collective demands instead of resisting them can be more or less great. From the point of view of conscience, however, what matters is that one feels oneself subjected to an overpowering force which comes neither from a moral norm nor from the sum of individual demands, but simply from the fact of collective existence. It is an experience of disorder maintained by laws of iron.

It is natural that the individual in a crowd should count for what he has most externally in common with others. But this is also a grave constriction, because an individual can appear as a simple physical unit only when seen from outside. From *his* point of view, he cannot help feeling himself the free and mobile center of a network of vital relations which concern not only his fellows, but also the world as a whole and the meaning of his own existence. Now the conditions of mass society have this in common: the individual's own point of view is regularly driven down to the bottom. From this, along with the inevitable passivity, comes an experience of privation and of painful tension. Not having room also means not having room for the spirit.

Such a subjugation can be accepted as "natural." But it can never be "just" in the sense in which one says, for example, that among friends it is just that everything be shared equally. The difference is that, in this last case, even an unequal division could be just, provided that all agreed to it. In the case of the great number, even an arithmetically unexceptionable division is always imposed from outside: it can appear materially equal, but we can never be sure that it is justified.

EXCEPT WHEN HE RECOGNIZES common necessity, the individual who is part of a mass feels that every individual reaction (or attempted reaction) is affective; and the affective reactions are out of place there. What is normally required of us is a certain rationality of behavior—a certain *apathy,* at least in the sense of not brusquely opposing one's own demands to those of others. Even when a mass is carried along by "collective feeling," the characteristic fact is that the individual

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who lets himself be carried along can no longer distinguish his own feeling from those of the others, while the passion of all of them feeds his; he is completely subjected to the occasion. To escape, a violent wrench is required, a decision to separate himself from others, a desire to be *heretical.* Or else one must submit, adapt oneself, maneuver, manage things cleverly, and wait for the propitious occasion which permits everyone to have a little more space, ease, and freedom.

We are together because "we can't help it." This is the prime fact. No one can help it. Everyone knows that the other person is constrained by the same necessity which has compelled one's self. Here is, one could say, the normative fact of the "mass situation," its justification, and even the foundation of its humanity. Only if we recognize this necessity, this common subjection, does the other person impress himself on our consciousness as a "fellow man." Otherwise, the relation between individuals in a mass is material, external, and provisional, and the next fellow appears as a profoundly alien being, or even as an obstacle and an enemy; if he were removed our situation would be easier, we would be more comfortable, there would be *more room.*

In such a situation one is infinitely distant from any sense of security; everything is precarious. The individual next to me is nothing to me, and yet he is a man like me; his closeness weighs on me, but so does mine on him; contact with my fellows is inchoate and transitory, but I never cease being with them. In this way we experience a brutal sense of the ephemeral, material, dreary, overwhelming. *Oi Brotoi.* All is momentary, there is no durable meaning either in our acts or in our thoughts. We are mortal.

The condition of the individual in the mass is completely ambiguous and obscure: caused by all and willed by no one; inevitable and "natural," but unjustifiable and artificial; solitary and unanimous; essentially unstable and dangerous, but yet reassuring; loaded with violence and hostility, but yet fraternal. What is most ambiguous and obscure is the relation between the individual and his fellow. How does one treat him, and speak of him? *Who* is he—this being who is both an intimate and a stranger? It would be almost as easy to imagine what the first men were like in the dawn of time.

WHAT CAN BE the relation between such an experience and "aristocratic" demands?

This—to return to the commonplace examples which we have purposely chosen—is a little like asking oneself if it is possible to read Kant in a packed train, or to practice epicurean wisdom in the middle of a mass of peasants on strike. Obviously not, and normally one would not even have such an idea. But why not? All you need is sufficient power of concentration and self-control. However, the question would be: If in similar situations, the individual could think and act so "aristocratically" would he conceivably communicate to his neigh-

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bor the fruits of his reflections, or persuade him to imitate his conduct? Obviously, we are dealing in absurdities.

Now, if one speaks of the relationship between the mass situation and spiritual and cultural "values," the first point to clear up is that of the language which is appropriate to the relationship, of the meanings which it allows to be communicated.

When one deals with a worker in a shop, or with an individual in a subway crowd, the mass situation is much more indifferent and, at the same time, much more rigid than any other social occasion. By its very nature, it admits both the Buddhist and the Christian, the humanist and the sectarian, the crudest and the most sensitive person; it is neutral as regards any distinction of race, color, or nationality; it is democratic in the extreme. But it is also exclusive, special, and demanding: obviously there is not a Christian way to work a lathe or a humanistic way of being on a train. The Christian, humanistic, or other "values" are reserved for different, more "suitable" occasions.

From the tolerance that is intrinsic in such a situation comes the optimistic attitude in looking at "modern times." Since the modern situation is presented as a simple state of fact, in itself neutral as to the more complex demands of the individual, one deduces that, whatever its imperfections and present evils, it is always possible to "christianize" them, let us say, or "humanize" them—to make them evolve towards the "better."

The pessimists, on the other hand, see in the simplicity and in the wretchedness of the mass a virulent and active negation of complex and "noble" demands. From the point of view of the uniqueness of the individual as from that of the universal quality of "values," the situation appears to them very nearly the worst possible.

The crucial fact, however, escapes both optimists and pessimists. To speak of "values" regarding a concrete situation means to speak of modes of being, not of ideal pure relations. Now, it is as modes of being that Christian or humanistic "values" are found to be suspended, reduced to suitable proportions (that is, to some form of private cult), and therefore inoperative. Optimism seems groundless. But if one speaks of "values" in a purely spiritual sense, then, certainly, no state of fact can contradict them. On the plane of discourse, "values" remain eternally valid, for one can validly talk about them in any situation. It would be absurd to maintain that a given social situation hinders liberty of thought or the possibility, for the individual, of behaving honestly and delicately to the man next to him. What a factual condition can hinder is the natural translation of thoughts into acts; or that an individual's noble behavior represents not a private and exceptional fact, but a norm to which all *ought to* conform.

The intellectuals' pessimism refers to the discursive efficacy of moral and cultural "values" on the mass. But actually the crisis concerns more fundamental facts.

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III

The individual, in his work, in politics, in the circumstances of social life, may submit to acting in a given way because "he can't help it." In behaving this way, however, he does not deny that it would be better to be able to do what he does with the conviction of doing something good and useful. But he feels forced to put aside the question of good and evil. Naturally, if the necessity to which he submitted seemed to be in absolute contradiction to his firm religious or moral convictions, he would not act as he does; he would have compunctions about doing wrong and his situation would change. But what one does because one cannot do otherwise does not appear as a moral choice, does not openly contradict any "value." Indeed, such an action is characterized by rationality, in the sense in which one considers it rational for the individual to submit to circumstances independent of his will. Thus, it hardly seems reasonable for a worker to oppose the technical demands of the factory on the grounds of conscience; or for a citizen to claim the privilege of individual liberty as against bondage to the collective organization. Such ties do not appear bad in themselves, just as being crushed in a mob does not seem degrading in itself. There is no reason to be opposed to them.

And yet the situation is obscure and troubling.

The question of doing right or wrong, whatever sense it has, is present and disturbing just because it is avoided, or better, repressed. The ambiguous character of the situation is revealed by the fact that there seems to be no reason at all to oppose it. But neither does one accept it. There are, instead, many reasons to submit to it. But they are reasons of convenience, more than of conscience. Conscience (in the sense of willing assent to what one does) is suspended.

This experience of suspension, of obscurity, of doubt, is the severe test to which the modern situation puts "values"—not only traditional beliefs, but the idea itself that it is necessary to believe in something, and that the difference between believing in what one does and *what one is,* and not believing in them, is a real difference.

For this reason the mass situation is a morally extreme one. In sum, it is what we mean by nihilism: to live by setting aside the question of whether what one does day by day has any meaning, to know that one sets aside the question, and to recognize, at the same time, that this does not change the course of events.

The course of events, in fact, does not change. But existence is deprived of meaning when it is reduced to a long series of obligatory and indifferent acts. It is stripped of value, not so much with respect to the "values" of culture and of tradition (which can always be in some way maintained and cultivated privately), but in itself. Existence is literally "unbelievable," and an unbelievable existence means an existence which drags on in a state of continual bad faith.

In order for this to happen, it is necessary—it is important to insist upon this—that material or, at any rate "objective," conditions be bad.

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It is enough for the individual to find himself in an ambiguous situation respecting his own action, to do what he does without conviction —to act without violating any deeply felt belief, but also without clearly observing one.

IV

One can at this point return to what, according to Ortega y Gasset, distinguishes the mentality of the mass-man: the fact that "to have an idea does not mean to have reasons for having it."

If one assumes that such a man thinks capriciously; that, good reasons being clear to him because they are written in the heaven of intelligible Ideas, he arbitrarily chooses, *against* them, the idea which suits him; and that then, even knowing the place of truth, he "does not care in the least to be in the right," then, certainly, his will appears as wicked as it is obstinate.

But such an assumption is not legitimate. Such a man, granted that he exists, would be an intellectual sophist, not a mass man.

Even according to Ortega y Gasset's definition, the *mass man,* the "man in the street," *homo communis,* is not someone who refuses to give reasons or does not care about being in the right: he has not reasons to give and, as for being in the right, he *cannot* care about it. He has only the ideas that his situation provides—no more than that. In a situation in which the most obvious reasons are reasons of fact and of necessity, he can receive only conventional, stereotyped ideas. These ideas are not false; rather, they are neither false nor true. The mass man has literally lost true reasons. This is the only fact which explains how, in the modern situation, the "aristocratic values" have, in their turn, "lost power."

In what sense, then, may one say that the intellectual is superior to the man of the masses? In no sense. The intellectual can distinguish himself from the mass only by his greater consciousness of their common situation. But he can show this consciousness in only one way —by speaking the truth without presuming that he is the sole owner of it. As a matter of fact, the question is not majority and minority, the mob and the elite. *The mass situation involves everybody.* The necessity of daily relations, which not even the most privileged can avoid, makes us all part of the mass; we are all forced to use the current language, especially those who strongly desire to communicate with their fellows and to address the community as such.

The language of the mass, based as it is on ready-made notions, consists of cut and dried formulas in which words have a fixed value, purely indicative and only slightly expressive. The most obvious example is the language of propaganda, advertising, and what are called, not by chance, "media of mass communication." Such a tongue resembles the language of cybernetics which the experts themselves call a dead language—incapable of transmitting information about *new facts.* The simple mixing of such a conventional language with the more or less

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authentic language of private life and of significant exchanges between individuals creates a situation without precedent.

So that the situation of the intellectual, or of the Platonic philosopher who, having returned to the cave, seeks to communicate to his fellows the truths which he has glimpsed, is paradoxical. The language of the street is ineluctable; no one has created it, but everybody is forced to use it. To the extent to which he preserves some freedom, however, the intellectual cannot accept a situation and the language it involves simply because "he cannot help it." But, on the other hand, he cannot ignore a state of things and a language to which, since he is only an individual among others, he yields like the others. If he wishes to talk to others, he is obliged to use their language. No matter how refined, sensitive, and aware he may be, he can define his ideas only in relation to the ideas of the mass; even if it is to oppose them. This already sets him in bondage. On the other hand, if he truly seeks lost reasons and truths, if he wishes to communicate meanings and not merely to use formulas, if he feels himself the more or less worthy heir of a tradition, the intellectual must wish to be free. But he knows one thing for certain: he exists and works in a situation in which he himself has only an equivocal and doubtful relation to tradition, to the "aristocratic values," to reasons and intelligible truths. This is an extreme situation.

The situation is extreme not so much as regards culture as its *raison d'être,* which is truth lived and participated in. Culture, in fact, is the ground not of truth, but of the search for it. Truth appears only in lived experience, in feeling oneself in harmony with the nature of things and the world. And common truth is found and lived in common: it is a vital harmony which no idea or cultural form, no single individual, can ever really express, much less create.

Truth—like man himself—does not merely need to be left at liberty, not to be oppressed; above all, it must be freely sought and desired. Now, to the extent to which the individual's experience of his social existence is an experience of non-truth and of non-free acts, he does not seek the truth: he wants ready-made ideas, quickly reassuring; he seeks, not freedom, but the organization of a force capable of assuring the satisfaction of his needs. Of truth, as of liberty, the individual feels only the privation, and only when he is face to face with himself —in the lack of reason and of sense which he discovers in his existence.

So corrupt a situation does not change by virtue of pure ideas, nor by violence, but uniquely, "according to the order of Time," through our suffering the common lot in common, seeking to understand it.

And the fact remains that we do not leave the cave in a mass, but only one by one.

Translated by PAUL ALPERS

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AMERICAN NOTEBOOK

Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

1. The Negroes Find Their Own Way

Travers Clement

Back in the age of innocence (November 1903 to be exact) the *International Socialist Review* devoted a leading article to "the Negro problem." It was signed by Eugene V. Debs. Writing from deep in Louisiana, Debs had some colorful observations to make and ended with a statement of the classic socialist position: "There never was any social inferiority that was not the shrivelled fruit of economic inequality. The Negro, given economic freedom, will not ask the white man any social favors; and the burning question of 'social equality' will disappear like mist before the sunrise. I have said and say again that, properly speaking, there is no Negro question outside the labor question—the workingclass struggle."

The significance of Debs' mistake, which he shared with almost all Marxists, has never been so clearly revealed as by the recent events in the South. Social injustice has been fought and rectified by the Negroes themselves without waiting for labor's "economic emancipation" or for the guidance of various "vanguards of the proletariat" who so regularly denounced the very tactics that are bringing major victories to the Negroes. It is true that the economic condition of the Negro has improved and that this, in turn, has provided new possibilities for struggle. But the essential impetus to the awakening we see down South is best expressed by the Negro ministers when they tell us that there is *a new Negro*. And while there are no doubt many causes for the emergence of this new Negro, ranging from the industrialization of the South to the Supreme Court decision, it had better be said that the "ripening of class consciousness," or the leadership of any Marxist faction, is scarcely among them.

One can concede that the Montgomery bank teller (white) quoted in *Time* has a point when he says of his colored fellow-passengers: "They'll find out all they've won in their year of praying and boycotting is the same service I've been getting every day." Yet one cannot but feel he missed the essential point. Mrs. Rosa Parks, the quiet seamstress whose arrest over a year ago precipitated the Montgomery affair, touched upon it when she gave her reason for not moving back in the bus: "It was a matter of dignity; I could not have faced myself and my people if I had moved."

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The brilliant victory in Montgomery has given the American Negro community a confidence and hope such as no other event in years. This display of quiet determination, courage, good humor, discipline and plain common sense brought to bear on a clear-cut issue by ordinary men and women operating under the frightful pressures of the Deep South is something that every Negro can appreciate and understand. As the Chattanooga correspondent of the *New York Times* points out: "Unlike the public-school issue, bus integration is not hedged with complex administrative problems and legalistic maneuvering. No qualification or special talent is needed for getting on a bus."

WHAT BEGAN as a minor skirmish has now become a symbolic and rapidly widening struggle. One of the main factors in this development has been the imaginative use of techniques of non-violence which have dramatized the movement and given it a freshness such as that attained by no other mass action on the American scene since perhaps the great sit-down strikes of the '30s. Moreover, the new tactics (new only in the sense of still being experimental in the U.S.) seem to have confounded and above all demoralized those white supremacists who understand little but violence.

Next to the growth of assurance among the Negroes, the most remarkable fact about the Southern situation is the manifest sense of guilt among the whites—the virtual acknowledgment that they are defending an *immoral* point of view. Not only have many whites lost confidence; they no longer believe in the virtuousness of their "cause," even if they still continue bitterly to uphold it. In what adds up to an attempt to contain the movement, twenty-one Southern and border cities have quietly done away with bus segregation laws. Even when these laws are dropped voluntarily, however, pressure for segregation often is effectively maintained (as in many of these twenty-one cities) and can be broken down only by organized action. White supremacist pressure, stupidity of officials, and just plain inertia in the majority of Southern towns and municipalities will force some kind of struggle. But this is clearly a case of "too little, too late." The Negro even in the deepest South is not going to stop now with the mere ending of bus segregation. The Montgomery victory has given a tremendous push to what in long range terms is much more important —the struggle for integration in the schools.

What we are witnessing is not just an extension of the type of activities that have been carried on and directed primarily by progressive Negroes from the North. The whole Southern Negro population is beginning to stir from its decades of lethargy. When the time seemed ripe for a test case on segregation in Atlanta buses, the Rev. William H. Borders, one of the most respected Negro leaders of the South, told reporters: "We could get thousands of people to take the first rides. But we have to hold them back. It's very important that everything goes as planned." James L. Hicks, writing in the Negro paper, *New York Amsterdam News,* declares: "One of the great surprises of 1956 to Negro leaders themselves has been the fact that they suddenly found that the Negro masses were far ahead of them in their willingness to demand their freedom and to back up their demands

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with sacrifice."

As this journalist says, the new Negro "just isn't scared any more."

Item: The minister in Birmingham who crawled out from under the wreckage of his bombed home to tell reporters: "I'm going out now to lead my people on those buses and I'm going to sit right up behind the driver."

Item: The Kentucky mother who, when her 7-year-old son begged to go to the nearby all-white school, said: "If you've got the guts to go, I've got the guts to send you."

Item: The Atlanta minister who, on his way to jail in a patrol wagon for violating that city's bus segregation law, remarked: "There's no segregation on this bus."

Contrast this, if you please, with the sneaky subterfuges of the opposition, such as declaring a bus out of order and removing it from its run when Negroes enter to take seats in the forward section. Or the example of the Birmingham minister who drove up to the police in his own car, asked to be arrested for his deliberate violation of the segregation ordinance and was handed a ticket for driving without a license.

If the struggle radiating out from Montgomery had served no other purpose than to segregate publicly the segregationists, it would have justified itself many times over. The politicians and big wigs of the South who want both to keep segregation respectable and to enforce it where it counts are wincing at the blows which they very well know are threatening the whole Jim Crow edifice. Their position has never been weaker; nor the spinelessness of leading Northern liberals, who are such energetic champions of Negro rights that they cannot even clear the hurdle of the Senate filibuster, more apparent. One can contrast with the latter those Southern white judges who, to the surprise of the Negroes and perhaps even themselves, are ruling in the Negroes' favor.

THE 1956 presidential election marked the first major shift in the Negro vote in twenty-five years. Disgusted by the manhandling of the civil rights issue at the Democratic National Convention and the soft-pedaling (often back-pedaling) not only by Stevenson but also by such "friends of the Negro people" as Eleanor Roosevelt, Hubert Humphrey and Harry Truman, from four to seventy-five per cent of the voters in predominantly Negro areas switched from the Democratic to the Republican column. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that this shift marks any real trend among the Negroes toward conservatism; it was primarily a reflex of protest.

Since the election, the complete silence on the part of the White House in face of the flaunting of the courts by Southern racists has intensified the Negroes' sense of political resentment. This is reflected in some interesting demands such as that President Eisenhower deliver a major speech in a Southern city urging all Southerners to abide by the Supreme Court's decision; or that Vice President Nixon, whose concern for freedom carried him all the way to the Austro-Hungarian border and more recently to the African Gold Coast, swing South in the same cause; or that the "Voice of America" beam some of its liberty-inspiring programs this way.

In dealing with "the Negro problem" there is always the danger of letting one's indignation rip and leav-

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ing the impression, particularly on sensitive Southerners, that one would change the color of our prevailing racial chauvinism from white to black. Any one who has toured the South years ago and then revisited it recently, as has the writer, could not fail to be impressed by the tremendous changes that have taken place there and the general improvement in race relations that has resulted. An amazing proportion of Southern whites are showing themselves ready to accept desegregation with good grace, even good humor. Evidence is mounting that thousands of them are fed up with the whole sorry mess and would like, to use a good old Southern expression, "to get shut of it." When an ex-Columbia student, Greenwich Villager and *ersatz* racist, who is apparently a political disciple of Ezra Pound, has to go down to Tennessee in order to get the pot boiling, the native rabble-rousers are really in a bad way.

2. The Unions and the 5th Amendment

Sid Lens

The AFL-CIO, troubled by moral decay and a deep conflict of union philosophies within its ranks, has adopted a "code of ethics" to rid itself of such practices as milking health and welfare funds, accepting bribes and granting charters to acknowledged crooks. So far, this has led to the suspension of three small international unions and two locals.

Still to be considered are the more significant sources of corruption within segments of the building trades and teamster unions. To suspend the laundry and distillery unions will mean very little unless their allies, particularly within the teamsters union, are dealt with. So long as such dubious organizations receive support from the teamsters—particularly pledges not to cross their picket lines—they will be able to survive outside the AFL-CIO.

The major battle, therefore, is still to be joined. In taking on the teamsters the Federation proceeds more cautiously. As a first step, the AFL-CIO Council ruled that unionists who take the Fifth Amendment before a congressional committee should be expelled. This position is clearly aimed at Dave Beck, Jimmy Hoffa and their associates who are first on the list for questioning before the McClellan committee, and who have already indicated that there are some subjects on which they prefer silence.

While few people will shed any tears over the prospect of embarrassing Dave Beck, the AFL-CIO ruling on the Fifth Amendment is fraught with extreme danger. It is a reversal of the sound union principle that labor must clean its own house. It gives credence to the false notion that recourse to the Fifth Amendment is automatically an admission of guilt.

The fact that Walter Reuther and George Meany yielded ground on these matters is indicative of their desperation: they see Beck and his

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friends as so powerful an obstacle that they do not feel capable of handling them without some government help. As a result they pass by the fact that their ruling on the Fifth Amendment —coming at a time when the quiet corrosion of civil liberties in the United States remains as serious a problem as the dramatic attacks upon it a few years ago—helps to reinforce the cynical view that expediency warrants the automatic punishment of those who resort to constitutional rights.

BEHIND the corruption fight is a broader conflict of union philosophy, and we can expect that from now on this conflict will intensify. Beck considers himself the leader of the business unionists, and he has been hunting for issues on which to mobilize what was formerly the AFL (excluding the machinists and Dubinsky). He did this over the question of representation in the industrial union department, when he demanded at the merger convention that his whole million and a half membership be voted into that department. He did it when he offered a loan to the independent —and corrupt—longshoremen. He is doing it now when he and his building trades allies jettison attempts to unify the major city and state federations of labor. Behind all this lies his belief that old line business unionism and the more socially-conscious (though far from socialist) unionism of Reuther, Carey, *et. al.* cannot mix.

So far Beck's estimate has proven correct. The building trades are insisting on their craft jurisdiction even in construction and repair work long covered by industrial unions. They are also wary of new organization efforts by the Federation because in almost all cases these must be conducted along industrial lines.

The hostility between union groups is so intense that at least three international unions are suing each other for alleged slanderous remarks. Almost none of the outstanding disputes prior to the merger have been resolved, and so far no important rival unions have consolidated ranks.

As for Reuther, he and the ex-CIO forces (augmented by Hayes' machinists and the ILGWU) feel they have now served their apprenticeship in the re-united federation and must come to grips with the disputed issues. The Federation has been immobilized for fourteen months. Its original goal of organizing millions of new workers has been stymied by jurisdictional quarrels. Corruption and stagnation have darkened labor's reputation. Reuther and his allies have therefore finally begun to take the initiative. Where the conflict will end no one can as yet foresee.

In the final analysis the question of labor idealism is really at the root of the present difficulties. American labor officialdom is the only one in the world which endorses capitalism and plays capitalist politics. Its level of social responsibility is consequently lower than anywhere else. The fact that business morality can play so dominant a role as to finally require a "code of ethics" is indicative of the problem. The merger laid down certain pre-conditions for altering this state of affairs—not towards what a socialist might consider the most desirable form of unionism, but towards more socially-oriented forms nonetheless. The merger, however, has not yet resulted in *unity*. That still remains to be forged—through struggle within the ranks, and organizational, economic, and political action.

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In a Paris by-election held this past January, Pierre Poujade came in a poor fourth. But for reasons that are presented in the article below, it would be a mistake to assume that his movement, or one like it, may not be of importance in the political future of France. The following study was written before the Parisian by-election, but retains its full interest as an analysis of a recurrent malaise in French politics.—Ed.

POUJADE AND THE SICKNESS OF FRANCE

Eugen Weber

I

The appearance of 52 Poujadists in the French Chamber of Deputies came as a shock to all parties. Some of these deputies have since been turned out by deft parliamentary maneuvering and others have resigned; but the reality of their two and a half million votes, over 12 per cent of the total in the election of January 1956, remains. In terms of actual numbers they stood fourth—after the Communists, Socialists, and Moderates, but ahead of the Catholic MRP and the various Radical factions.

The Poujadist *Union de Défense des Commerçants et Artisans* is a mushroom party that had contested no other general election. It was born in the summer of 1953 when, warned by a Communist colleague, Pierre Poujade defeated an attempt to make a routine fiscal investigation in the little town of Saint-Céré (Lot). By the end of 1954 it had rolled through the South-West and into North Africa. It already presented two peculiar and paradoxical characteristics—the Communist connection, indicating that Communists had helped foster the movement,* and the North African connection, underscored when the first national congress of the UDCA was held in Algiers.

Increasingly popular in the provinces, its next task was the conquest of Paris: throughout 1955 great public meetings, an apparently successful intimidation of the Chamber over the tax issue, attempts to organize a taxpayers' strike, all publicized the new movement and its aggressive, photogenic young leader. December brought nationwide success, topped off by the election of the whole Poujadist slate in Paris. In spite of this, most people still snickered at the idea of any significant showing at the polls, and

* P. Poujade, *J'ai Choisi le Combat*, Saint Céré, 1955, p. 174: In December 1953 the president of the Lot Chamber of Commerce speaks of "M. Poujade et ses chaperons rouges," of which "Poujade and his red riding hoods" would be either a partial or tendentious translation.

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Poujade himself was branded a vain braggart when he voiced his hope of winning forty seats in January. He won fifty-two. [See page 187.—Ed.]

The Poujadist UDCA emerges as the party of middle-class protest in small towns and in the countryside, representing a public relatively stagnant and backward, opposed to changes which might threaten the established order and economic advantages it enjoys, yet impatient of the established order which seems weak, indecisive, inefficient, hardly a trustworthy champion of internal order or national prestige.

Envisaged thus, this movement of commercial travelers, small shopkeepers, businessmen, country pedlars, barkeepers and *rentiers* appears as a revolt of the provinces against the capital, an aspect of the "Girondist" revolt that Albert Thibaudet described before the war, when he pointed out that the successful politician is the one who governs *against* Paris. It is the revolt of the "decent people" (Poujade's *braves gens*) against the sink of corruption that is ruining the country. It is the revolt of the little people (Poujade's *petits*—of which he is one), of the classic little man so dear to the heart of the Third Republic, so dear to the heart of the Radical bourgeoisie, against the growing oppressiveness of state and money-power. Against the wiles of these Leviathans, Poujade invokes, *"La vieille France," "La pure tradition française,"* the symbolic rooster, sharp of spur *"qui chantera encore cocorico et non pas cocacola."**

But if my assumption concerning the sources of Poujade's strength is correct, it applies not only to the disgruntled provincial middle-class, but also to a peasantry in traditionally close relations with the small country town. These people have not changed much since Renan described their aspirations after the elections of 1869.* They want a government that is not too costly, not too showy, not too interfering; they want to be left alone except when they need help; they want to be treated as equals in principle, while far too shrewd to believe in equality in practice; above all they firmly refuse all sacrifice to interests, ideals or glories which they cannot concretely conceive. It is among this class that the propaganda of the small shopkeepers of the Poujadist UDCA has apparently made real inroads.

These peasants are not necessarily in distress; but they find it awkward and uncomfortable to adapt themselves and their methods of exploitation to changing market conditions, they resent the profits of middlemen, the increasing difficulties that face the small farmer; and Poujadism is their protest. Traditionally, a protest should manifest itself as a vote further Left. However, the extreme Left has now been reached by many, tried for some time, and found ineffective. On the other hand Poujade is not clearly a man of the Right, any more than General Boulanger was. Writing in *Esprit,* Jean-Marie Domenach quotes a *concierge* who declares on election morning: "I am going to vote Left: I will vote for Poujade." To this woman, comments Domenach, a vote for the Left is a vote of protest—*"c'est embêter le gouvernement."*

Here is a ground on which persons moved by vague and contradictory

* Poujade, *op. cit.,* p. 225.

* E. Renan, *La Reforme Intellectuelle et Morale, Oeuvres* I, Paris 1947, p. 347.

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aims and dissatisfactions can meet with profit. They have met on it before—before the First World War, and again before the Second: Sorel and Maurras, Doriot and Déat and Laval, are only theorists or leaders interpreting the tendency, using the possibility.* In these circumstances, the fact that Poujade lacks a program or a doctrine is, if anything, an advantage. It displeases fewer people than a positive platform might well do, it makes him more "available," it leaves his hands free for opportunistic action. For it is action that Poujade holds out to millions of Frenchmen disgusted by the inactivity of an inane government, and by its tragic consequences—at home, in Indochina, in North Africa, at Suez, in the Saar. Disgusted, but politically naive and ready to believe that decision will solve difficulties apparently due to indecision. And ready also to enjoy the opportunity of unaccustomed activity and adventure, of passionate and exciting doings, of escape from dreary everyday routine. If we incline to underrate such reasons for Poujadist success, we should recall Mussolini's remark: "Fascism was not given out to the wet nurse of a doctrine elaborated beforehand round a table: it was born of the need for action; it was not a party, but in its first two years it was a movement against all parties." And, he might have added, it was a movement against the accepted political machinery and institutions.

* Already on August 15, 1912, Jean Neybour was writing in the *Revue Socialiste* about the strange sympathy between certain syndicalists and the *Action française*: "Cette tendance tout a fait curieuse qui rapproche les théoriticiens d'extrême-droite et d'extrême-gauche a aussi sa cause dans un mépris accentué du parlementarisme."

II

When opponents brand his movement as Fascist, Poujade replies that Fascism recruited its troops among workers disgusted with Socialism—that it is in fact a development of Socialist doctrine and working-class frustration—whereas Poujadism is merely a combination of good French common sense that has too long been lacking and of middle-class frustration. However, intelligent antagonists like J.-M. Domenach point out that such a distinction is hardly a valid one: "What Fascism was to Socialism, Poujadism is to Radical-Socialism," writes Domenach. "Poujadism is an authoritarian formula for the middle-class . . . a little Fascism for little Frenchmen."*

Fascism, as a matter of fact, borrowed Nationalist slogans from its dupes and Socialist slogans from its enemies, but it is true that its main appeal was to men who, squeezed between great capitalist monopolies and growing state control, looked towards it for a promise of survival. It recruited its troops from the "small men"—the lower and lower-middle class in the country, in provincial towns, in unpromising unorganized urban employment. It appealed to few intellectuals, to few industrial workers, and to sections of the upper class largely as a stick with which to beat the established order. It was, in effect, much the same thing that M. Domenach knows as Poujadism, and M. Domenach and many other Frenchmen who remember such rotten growths in the pre-war decade cannot fail to recognize the connection.

In France as in other countries, such Fascist, nationalist, anti-Semitic, chauvinistic leagues appeared between

* *Esprit*, February 1956, p. 258.

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the wars—movements of disillusion, discontent and protest, based on contempt for the existing political parties, machinery, and institutions. This was nothing new. Already in 1909 we can find *Le Temps* asserting that the provinces no longer felt the moral influence of any great party.* And, some twenty years later, Seignobos provided a perceptive sketch of the disgruntled small bourgeois adherent or sympathizer of such Right-wing movements—of Radical origin, of vaguely rebellious temper, without political experience, but traditionally *anti* whatever the government in power. "Traditionally hostile to the foreigner and anti-Semitic because of its hatred of the money power," this bourgeoisie "has been reinforced in numbers since the Dreyfus affair, when it absorbed the remnants of the old royalist and Catholic parties."

As far as one can judge, Poujade's relations with the right-wing leagues have remained close. Roland Dorgères, leader of the pre-war Green Shirts, had been a close adviser until a recent quarrel separated the two men. But many of the same ilk have remained, and dominate the party. The UDCA newspaper, *Fraternité Française,* was run by two ex-writers of the collaborationist *Je Suis Partout*—Jeantet and Barbé. This latter, together with Maurice Bardèche, and the ex-Vichy propagandist Jeanneret, provide the brain-trust of the movement. They collaborate with another ex-member of the *Action française,* a certain Chevallet, who directs the party's much-touted *école des cadres,* and ensures the liaison with the North African groups of *Présence française.*

It is true that during the past year, apart from a few gestures designed to catch the public eye, the UDCA has stagnated. As some had predicted, electoral success does seem to have had the effect of slowing down the original impetus. There has been talk of a *"malaise du mouvement,"* of disorder and insubordination, of a *"flottement des esprits."* As with an attack unexpectedly carried well beyond its objectives, Poujadists have felt the need to halt, regroup, and reassess the situation. Poujade's diagnosis seems to have been that the movement was becoming infected by success, succumbing to the notoriously corrupting air of the Chamber. He could remember similar doldrums before—in 1954, even in 1955—each followed by a new surge forward. In 1954 the lagging movement had drawn strength from its North African supporters (it still does today); in 1956 it would recover its purity by returning "to the healthy provincial climate" of Saint-Céré, perhaps even by a resignation *en masse* of its deputies. The cure has not proved effective.

It continues to demand the calling of an Estates General of the nation, free of the incurably rotten influences of everyday politics, which alone can reform the country and its constitution. How far the UDCA is being discredited, how soon (if ever) it will be forgotten, depends less on what it does than on what its rivals, nearer the levers of power, do or fail to do. For the moment, in spite of defeats and desertions, it continues to appear as the most successful of the many "leagues" which have haunted the Third and Fourth Republics. Its violence is only one side of its nature; and the "reaction" for which it

* *Le Temps,* January 13, 1909, *Lettres de Province.*

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stands is the stronger for being, in effect, largely a stubborn wistfulness for a lost past which makes even the Third Republic look beautiful under the Fourth, and a dull resentment against a present to which it is often difficult, and sometimes impossible, to adjust. Hence the very characteristic absence of a program, which makes the movement so adaptable, and so difficult to place.

As Domenach says, the objection that Poujade is a fool has no value. We shall never know whether Hitler was intelligent. The absurdities spouted by Hitler and Mussolini served a double purpose, however; they reassured their opponents on the Left who believed in the good sense of the public, and they appealed to those elements among the masses who find reasonable expression too tiring. And M. Domenach thinks that the greatest danger of Poujadism lies in this very mixture of stupidity and cunning that is served up by the leader, and on which the lieutenants are able to capitalize.

This seems a fair judgment of the present reality and of the danger inherent in it. The present French regime represents a fraction of an electorate from which the 25 per cent Communist vote is permanently and *ipso facto* excluded. Its record is a long tale of costly failure. The appearance of the UDCA in a position from which it can most conveniently throw a spanner into these already-rickety works may be merely another passing manifestation of present discontent, fated to disintegrate like De Gaulle's RPF. But that depends rather on the ability of the groups still in control of power to deal with the causes of the discontent, to stem the disillusion, on which Poujade has cashed in.

There is no good reason why the UDCA should not disintegrate like the RPF, its representatives tempted by prospects of the profits to be made from collaboration. But for that sort of operation one must have solid profits *to* offer, and this implies an improvement in French affairs and in the state of the nation—an improvement whose prospect is compromised by the Poujadist success itself. So, one must wait and see. As for the possibility that Poujade himself might succumb to disillusion, or despair of ever achieving his great work, and give up like Charles de Gaulle, there is little hope of that. Poujade has none of the intelligence or the sensitivity of De Gaulle. And that might be another point to be counted in his favor, as a contender for political power today.

What Was the Electoral Base of Poujade's Success?

The most obvious source of votes for Poujade has not been neglected by political commentators: the electors who had voted for De Gaulle's RPF in 1951 and who now, we are told, turned towards a similar party—anti-constitutional, anti-parliamentarian, chauvinistic, authoritarian, and middle class. And such explanations have their basis in fact: while the RPF lost over three million votes, its would-be heirs, moderates of the Catholic MRP, or of the Pinay or Faure factions, gained rather less than 700,000. What is more obvious than to attribute the rest to the Poujadists? And there are cases in point, as in Maine-et-Loire, where between 1951 and 1956 the RPF dropped nearly 59,000 votes while the Poujadists totted up almost 53,000.

But if we examine more closely the movement of votes away from the

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De Gaullist RPF or the movement toward Poujade, the two appear more complex and not necessarily interconnected. In many departments where the De Gaullists suffered their heaviest losses there is little if any corresponding gain for Poujade. Sometimes the Catholic MRP gained; sometimes the Communists and Socialists. In the Manche, for instance, where both Communists and Socialists forged ahead, no Poujadist appeared to reap the harvest.

The explanation in terms of a simple shift of votes appears too simple to be true, and so the question arises once more: what other sources has the new party tapped?

If we look at the areas where Poujade secured the heaviest vote, we shall note three main zones of influence: the first, in the Massif Central and in the South-West which was the movement's cradle. Here there is little evidence of profit from the De Gaullists, who were never very strong. As far as one can see, Poujade has here gained votes from all sides.

A second Poujadist bastion can be found in the South-East—in Dauphine, the Rhône valley, and part of Provence. There we see a solid block of departments where Poujadists never got less than 15 per cent of the vote, and normally more, rising to nearly 28 per cent in the Vaucluse. However, once again, the De Gaullists alone can hardly account for such gains. We find that, while their losses account for some of Poujade's gains, a good number come from the other parties. It is striking that the new party has been able to collect so many votes in a region loyal to the Left since 1871.

The third region where Poujadist success is apparent runs from the Atlantic coast between Gironde and Loire, south of the Loire, through Charente, Poitou, and Berry, to join the party's central positions in Bourbonnais, Lyonnais and Auvergne. Again, the votes are a mixed bag. In some departments the profit from De Gaullist losses seems clear. In others, however, the UDCA seems to have drawn mainly from the Catholics and the Communists in Vendée, from Socialists and moderate Radicals in Deux-Sèvres, from Socialists and Communists in Vienne, from Independents and Catholics in Indre. It is difficult to be certain of the exact provenance of votes; in such matters one can only estimate probabilities. In the Mayenne, for instance, where the UDCA gained one seat, all parties lost votes. It has been suggested that, instead of being transferred directly from each party to the UDCA, some of these votes shifted from one party to another, most probably rightwards. Thus, one might find MRP supporters voting for the moderates, and "moderates" shifting further Right to vote for M. Mounier, the Poujadist candidate. One might add to clarify a point that in France a moderate Radical is not so much a paradox as a commonplace.

We may conclude that the influence of the party seems strongest in areas where agriculture and small towns predominate. It is not too weak in the cities, but it is helpless in the industrial North and North East.

Of the departments that have given it more than 20 per cent of their vote, only the Isère is evenly balanced between industry and agriculture. The economy of the others is based largely on agriculture or fishing. Compared to the rest of the country, they are economically stagnant. Only Vaucluse and Gard achieve or slightly pass the national production norm. The others fall below it. And this becomes more striking if one considers the area of Poujadist influence as a whole as I have described it.

It is worth observing, incidentally, that of the three bastions we have especially noted, that of Dauphiné-Provence, and that of Berry-Bourbonnais-Auvergne, are traditionally inclined to the Left; whereas the Western departments, from Maine and Touraine to the sea, have a more varied political past but in the majority incline to the Right. This should stress further the varied nature of Poujadist support; but varied largely within the limits of the static France south of the Loire, not the modern, dynamic regions where industrialization, production, and incidentally the left-wing vote, are highest. For those are the areas where, in electoral terms, Poujadism is weakest.

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ON THE DANGERS OF BEING A RADICAL

J. H. Wheeler

One of Harold Laski's best essays concerned the dangers of being a gentleman. His own career, by contrast, is in great part a demonstration of the dangers of being a radical. For Laski was always a radical, even in the early days when his most significant theoretical and constitutional studies were made. And he always remained a constitutionalist, even in the later days when he grew uncomfortably tolerant of Stalinism.

Laski's radicalism was not only developed in his writings, it was also acted out in his career. This close relation between his theories and the problems of the day turned much of his writing into highly perishable polemics. However, this defect carries with it associated virtues, for when we are in doubt about the real meaning of one of Harold Laski's theories, we can often turn to the problems he was dealing with at the time and find decisive explication in his actions.

To READ THE LASKI correspondence with great men of affairs: FDR, Churchill, Attlee, Holmes and Frankfurter, recalls a spirit which was quite common a few years ago. It was a remarkably self-conscious spirit of historical prometheanism. Harold Laski was preposterously presumptive about history, about his own ability to understand its secret social mechanics, his duty to apprise decision-makers in great places of his findings, and then his expectation to sit back and watch history shift its direction and set course on the Laski bearings. Back of this was his creative sense of the historical moment. An historical transition could only be made under certain conditions. If the moment were passed over, it might never again return. Laski seemed to grow frantic in his study when he felt a historical moment was being ignored by the men of practical affairs who succumbed to their own bureaucratic impulses rather than his latest communique.

However, Laski's life recalls something Americans have almost forgotten. The English Left once underwent a period somewhat similar to that of the American '50s. There were many somber years for English radicalism following Ramsey MacDonald's departure in the Cabinet Crisis of 1931 and the resulting disintegration of the Labor Party. All during that time Englishmen like Laski looked to the United States, to FDR, and to achievements such as our TVA as relief from the defeat they had suffered at home. This was the time when defenders of civil liberties and academic freedom looked from England to America rather than vice versa. Laski himself had trouble with his chief at the London School, Sir William Beveridge, over his caustic profiles of prom-

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inent people in Labor's *Daily Herald.* Laski had to defend this outside writing before the school's governors, and finally his profiles ceased to appear.

There were such similarities with present-day America, but there were also important distinctions. England's intellectual atmosphere in the '30s was less restrictive than America's in the '50s largely because England had not at that time undergone her welfare state reforms. A very large majority of the opinion leaders in every political party believed or feared that socialism offered the only real solution. This affected the general intellectual atmosphere as seen in the way the Labor Party reacted to the disaster of 1931. For the general permissiveness to radicalism was such that following the crisis men like Laski were able to assume an ever larger role in Labor Party policy during the opposition period of the '30s. And they uniformly threw their influence behind the "keep left" policy, reproaching the old leaders of '31 for a failure of socialist nerve. Rather than a moderating vital center, it was a more forthright and courageous radicalism that the English left adopted during the thirties. The differences in social dynamics between the pre-welfare state England of the thirties and the America of the fifties inevitably gave the two periods an opposing receptivity to radicalism.

However, despite this distinction, England's period of ideological inclemency was in some respects similar to our own. Ironically, it was Laski, the soon to be discredited English libertarian, who felt it necessary in 1941 to reassure Americans through the pages of the *Washington Post* that despite certain failings, civil liberties were relatively well intact in England.

ANOTHER FACTOR, almost a lesson, stands out when one reconsiders Laski's life of applied political theory. This concerns his own well known concept of "revolution by consent." Laski was a revolutionary; his life was wrapped up in the struggle to achieve socialism. But he was also a firm believer in English constitutionalism, though this side of Laski has become somewhat over-shadowed by events toward the end of his life.

Domestic and international disasters had led after 1931 to Laski's well known Marxist revision: the advent of socialism in England might be associated with violence rather than parliamentary consent. This might occur if the representatives of the owning classes entrenched in decision-making, administrative and enforcement institutions vetoed in self-defense the socialist reforms of a constitutionally elected socialist government. Revolutionary violence might come, not as an initial instrument of the lower classes, but from the counterrevolutionary actions of the owning classes.

The Labor Cabinet crisis of 1931, the failures of the League of Nations, and the dynamics of the trends toward fascism in the continental democracies all seemed to Laski to prove the case. And despite some internal theoretical contradictions in Laski's development of these points—the mere fact of internal contradictions tells no more against Laski's political theory than against other political theorists, Machiavelli and Rousseau, for example—despite contradictions, and despite Laski's congenital tendency to accredit conspiratorial explanations of political events, his revisionist conclusions provided one of the most obvious explanations of the facts.

Laski's writings have been just a little over-Stalinized in the interpre-

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tations of recent years. He was a thoroughgoing radical in that he wanted to charge directly into the achievement of "socialism." But he was also a thoroughgoing constitutionalist in that he spent the last fifteen years of his life, not in organizing a Leninist cadre, but in disproving some of his own theories. His efforts at revolution by consent were aimed at the achievement by peaceful means of what he had "proved" to be impossible in his writings. For Laski did not really believe his own theoretical conclusions. And his own actions, based upon his constitutional instincts rather than his revolutionary theories, caused him at least two of the bitterest moments of his declining years: Churchill's wartime refusal to appoint him an official emissary to America, and the refusal of a middle-class jury to rule that he was a constitutional socialist rather than an advocate of violent revolution. He had daily vilified Churchill for "eighteenth century anti-democratic prejudices," yet he strangely seemed to assume that Churchill, as a proper English gentleman, would ignore these as mere debating points. The libel suit Laski brought was more complex.

Most professional political theorists could have made the distinction between Laski's own type of constitutional radicalism and outright revolutionary incitement. To believe that capitalists will employ counterrevolutionary strategems against the parliamentary measures of constitutionally elected socialists is analytically distinguishable from inaugural advocacy of violent revolution. To make a theory of potential right-wing violence the basis for arguments to organize a peaceful revolution by consent and thereby prevent the outbreak of violence is also a position understandable to the professional social theorist. But to a jury of middle-class Englishmen led by skilled opposition attorneys, these distinctions seemed preposterous. Their verdict was a crushing blow to Laski. Yet once again, note the paradox between radical and constitutionalist. In bringing suit Laski ignored the parts of his own theories which had told him the "inarticulate major premises" of English society were so strongly capitalist as to crush any apparent threat. Laski's mind was that of a radical, but his instincts were those associated with gentlemanly English constitutional proprieties.

With personal problems and in his own crises it was to his instincts that Laski turned, as if to say " 'King's X' now on all this revolutionary analysis of mine, there is a real problem affecting me, and obviously we must deal with it constitutionally and in a gentlemanly fashion." It was perhaps irrational for him to have been so naive. It was foolish to expect Churchill to send his own bitterest critic to America as an official representative of the war-time government. It was irrational to expect a middle-class jury to untangle radical paradoxes and make fine analytical distinctions. And if it is also true that Laski was disheartened by the failure of the victorious Labor Party properly to memorialize his services, then here again was the tragedy of the aging radical aspiring to the perquisites and accolades of propriety. The young Laski understood the dangers in being a gentleman, but he never assimilated the dangers for old gentlemen in being radical. Leslie Fiedler, in his criticism of Hiss, makes a point that applies well to Laski: "He seemed to desire both the pathos of the persecuted and the aura of unbounded re-

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spectability." This we recognize as true for Laski, especially in recalling the enigmatic message he dispatched from his deathbed: "The King's life is drawing peacefully to a close." This was the way the BBC had reported the King's approaching death, and Laski, in quoting it about himself, seemed to want to cloak his unsuspected terminal illness in high drama and the aura of impersonal persecution (seen also in his paper, "On Being a Plaintiff.").

Laski was a radical all right, and he was a Fabian. But more than this, he was a new kind of white-collar radical who refused to compromise away the participational courage of traditional lower-class radicalism, as he refused also to abandon the constitutional creed of English gentlemen. Having concluded that bureaucratization might provide the institutional basis for right-wing resistance to democratic socialist legislation, he revised and democratized the Fabian assumptions to fit this conclusion.

In addition to a professionalized civil service, bureaucratization had spawned the newer white collar intellectualized classes whose political aspirations were symbolized in and represented by Laski. Though Laski himself was not explicit about this, it is what provides the basis for understanding his special ideological contributions and for understanding the appeal of his own white-collar radicalism. For he came very close to actually making radicalism respectable, and this was the great need of the reforming intellectuals of the thirties.

However, there remains a much more important point. For although we are able to correct Laski's thesis concerning England's counter-revolutionary potential during the '30s (and I have tried to do this in another connection), we cannot disprove it. Men of the stature of Wallas, Wells, Shaw, Webb, Hobson, Russell, Tawney, Cole, Mannheim and innumerable others were in substantial agreement on this point. The fact that despite this they, together with Laski, joined in the leadership of a movement which was self-consciously both radical and constitutional contains a significant lesson. The integrity and responsibility of their leadership in the "keep left" program for a "revolution by consent" helped to make it a success and thereby helped England forge a peaceful transition to her welfare state.

Possibly, then, there is a larger social sense in which Laski was right in trying to combine political radicalism with the gentlemanly proprieties of the English constitutional tradition. Perhaps there would have been greater danger for England in his *not* having been a radical. Perhaps without a determined group of radicals, electioneering to reform the fundamentals of English society, yet dedicated to following democratic and constitutional means—perhaps without such white-collar radicalism—England might have courted the outbreak of violence by postponing too long her needed basic reforms. For we know that societies which inhibit radicalism foster thereby the dangers they abhor.

THE REAL DANGERS of being a radical may be, for society, just the opposite of those usually associated with the term, especially in the case of constitutionalized white-collar radicalism. And yet this is precisely the type of radicalism which has now been largely eliminated from the American scene.

No great newspaper commemorates its past by fostering muckraking crusades. If Peter Viereck can be be-

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lieved, we have come to the time of the last bohemian. Hardly any college today supports radical heretics loudly and proudly critical of all propriety, though there was a time when every campus confidently displayed such members. Now they are silent, hidden away, or gone. Of radical political organizations there are almost none.

Of course there have come characteristic transplantations and sublimations. Radicalism has been sociologized and anthropologized, so that instead of listening to campus critics emotionally decry the malefactors of great wealth, we now listen to social scientists impersonally analyze social stratification in Elmtown and the sociometric communications systems between politicians and racketeers in street corner society. This was really the nub of truth behind the fears of the Reece Committee's investigation of tax-exempt foundations, though Congressman Reece didn't know how to put his finger on it.

There has also been a romantic reaction in American radicalism. The muckraker has been transformed into the Man from Mars. Utopianism has fled to the pages of the science-fiction journals. In order to read popular socialist literature in America today it is necessary first to learn the romantic jargon of teletransportation of atomic configurations and game theory extrapolations of interplanetary warfare strategy. Romanticism has always been one form of reaction to ideological inclemency and today's radical-romantic exiles must be sought in the pages of the science-fiction journals, for that is our only popular literature concerned with man's ability to solve social problems.

Another form of the sublimation of American radicalism has come under the aegis of the return to religion. The old-fashioned secularist radicals of the thirties tended to identify the church with superstition, fascism and the status quo. They could see no radical good at all in religion. Now, however, one must add that religion furnishes just about the sole American institution recognizing the radical reform of society as a legitimate concern. When J. B. Matthews tried to carry on a Senate investigation of ecclesiastical radicalism a few years ago, this was the point he had in mind. Those who point out the conservative overtones of the return to religion overlook the radical significance of the fact that on campuses where there are no longer young socialist clubs or Marxist study groups, there are religious rallies to promote slum clearance, to serve sharecropper communities, to foster desegregation, to discuss the moral foundations of democracy, and to spell out in practical terms what it means to be a "radical" practicing Christian.

Yet all these forms of contemporary radicalism remain politically covert. Political radicalism is virtually nonexistent. And certainly we can see from many current examples, as well as from the example of Laski's own life, why this is true, and how dangerous it is to be a radical. However, what Laski's career also illustrates is that a constitutionalized radicalism may serve a crucial social function in helping to provide for peaceful transitions between old and new premises of society.

Americans, in having made it prohibitively perilous to be a Laski-type white-collar radical in the fifties, may be courting consequences quite the opposite of those they intend.

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COMMUNICATION—I

"Eruption in the Middle East"

Dan Wakefield

There are many criticisms to be made of Stanley Diamond's "Eruption in the Middle East" in the Winter 1957 DISSENT. Two main points, however, seem to illustrate the failure of his argument.

1. Mr. Diamond says that "The indicated immediate solutions seem rather obvious. First, the Arab refugee situations must be quickly ameliorated. These people are rotting away in an irredentist no-man's land, and most of the border incidents are rooted in their disaffection."

There is certainly no arguing with the importance of relieving the suffering of Arab refugees. But to claim that this should be a first step in the solution of the Arab-Israel dilemma is not so sound. The first step is the acceptance of the existence of Israel by Arab leaders and their willingness to carry on negotiations of some sort—at least to sit down at a table—with Israel's leaders, as Israel's leaders have urged ever since the signing of the "temporary" armistice agreements between the Arab states and Israel. Until this recognition and this willingness to talk is shown by the Arab leaders, it is impossible to start settlement of the refugee problem—or any other problem—on a lasting basis. How can Israel make an attempt at ameliorating the plight of the refugees when the leaders of the countries where the refugees are living will not consent to speak with Israel's leaders?

Also in error is the part of the statement by Mr. Diamond saying that "Most of the border incidents are rooted in their [the refugees'] disaffection." The border incidents are not the result of casual, spontaneous outbreaks of personal discontent. They are organized, government-sponsored actions by government-trained guerrillas and soldiers. This fact is not a product of the Israel leaders' fears or imagination. It has been clearly and proudly stated by Nasser, it has been announced over Radio Cairo, in the Egyptian press, the newspapers of Jordanian Jerusalem, over Radio Damascus, and by the new leader of the Jordanian army, Ali Abu Nawar.

2. Mr. Diamond writes that "Had Israel acknowledged that the refugee problem was the central problem in its relations with the Arab world, it would have been in a better moral and political position, and might have been able to neutralize the demagogic use to which the Arab leaders put the refugees."

Such a statement is only possible on the premise that the history of the Middle East began in the year 1947. Can anyone look back over the last fifty years and make a statement that the refugee problem, which came into

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existence in 1947, is the "central problem" of a conflict which has been going on ever since the first Zionists came to Palestine in the 1890s? The Arab riots of 1936-39 were certainly not a result of a problem which did not exist until a decade later. The entire complex of problems involved in Israel Arab relationships has much deeper roots than Mr. Diamond seems to care to discuss. Any attempt to simplify it and put a tornado into a nutshell can only be a disservice to both Israelis and Arabs.

Stanley Diamond replies:

I agree with Dan Wakefield to this extent: it *is* difficult to "put a tornado into a nutshell." The purpose of my piece, explicitly stated, was to raise certain issues, usually neglected, not to explore the full range of the situation in the Near East. He charges me, therefore, with an intent that I was at pains to acknowledge.

I think that I am fully aware of the recalcitrance of the "Arab" leaders on the refugee question, as well as on other problems. It is for this reason that I suggested Israeli pressure on the international level. If Israel had displayed more public and genuine concern about the refugees, instead of its characteristic legalistic and defensive posture; if a portion of the energy which has gone into the presentation of the Zionist "case" had been diverted to a fully responsible airing of a tragic situation, then there might have been, at least, a chance that the sting of this issue could have been pulled. Granted that this would have required the sort of moral imagination rarely displayed in national behavior, still it would have been an appropriate counter-part of some of Ben-Gurion's more messianic utterances, and an impressive display of what Zionists have learned on the battlefield that has been Jewish history.

When I wrote that "most of the border incidents are rooted in their [the refugees'] disaffection," I did not imply that these were necessarily casual, spontaneous incidents. Many were. But the fedayeen were organized. However, it was the *existence* of the refugees on the border, in a state of disaffection, which turned the borders into bases, and, incidentally, provided much of the manpower for the raiding gangs.

I am glad to hear that Mr. Wakefield acknowledges the depth of the Israeli-Arab problem. That is precisely why I stand by my shorthand statement that the Arab refugee problem is central. For these reasons: 1) The sheer existence of the refugees symbolizes the displacement of Arabs by Zionists, of Asians by Europeans. 2) An irredentist situation was thus created which led to the possibility of keeping Israel off balance militarily.

As for Mr. Wakefield's parting contention, I doubt whether my article did any disservice to plain Israelis and Arabs, although it was meant as a disservice to Israeli and Arab propagandists.

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Aaron Antonovsky

I find it unfortunate that the only commentary on the Middle East crisis in DISSENT was a brief (3-1/2 pages), superficial ("The crisis itself... cannot be fully explored here") and disjointed attack on the Israeli action.

Israel's attack, Mr. Diamond says, is to be condemned because it was immoral and impractical, and because it "calculated the risk of a third world war."

Was Israel's attack immoral? Morality is only meaningful in a social context. Immoral public behavior, if it is to mean anything, refers to social action which intensifies the suffering of the human beings involved. Though evidence is fragmentary as yet, the lot of the Gaza refugees may well have been improved. The lives of Israelis are now much less subject to terrorist raids. The masses of Egyptians were unaffected. Several thousand Egyptian and some 170 Israeli soldiers were killed. This must be contrasted to the far greater number who would have lost their lives with a continuation of the former state of affairs and an eruption at a time of Egypt's choosing. I believe that Israel's action not only did not intensify human suffering, but may actually have begun a process of its relief.

But Mr. Diamond shifts his ground quickly. He says "immoral, read impractical." If he means that the attack and subsequent events did not resolve the fundamental problems involved, I am certain that everyone would go along. I think that Israel's action involved no self-deception in this respect; it was a response to a no longer bearable situation, and it may prove to be a first step toward solution.

If Mr. Diamond really believes, as he writes, that practical politics is "the art and science of human survival," he must see that the superficial analogy of military action per se to "ineffectual [19th century] political behavior" obscures the practical aspects of the Israeli action. And these are several, each of some import. First, it alleviated the intense strain under which a beleaguered Israeli population had long labored, given the economic blockade, fedayeen attacks and a growing inbalance of arms. In doing so, it removed the danger of a rise to power of the rightist Heruth party. Secondly, it upset —albeit perhaps not permanently—the military timetable of the Arab high command. (I recommend, in this connection, a sketch of what might have been had Israel waited until the spring of 1957: see *Israel Speaks,* Dec. 28, 1956).

Thirdly, the Egyptian military and political machines have suffered a great loss, both in their arms stores and, what is of greater ultimate significance, in the puncture of the self-imposed myth of Arab military might. The Sinai debacle may well lead to an internal Egyptian struggle which might open the way to social change far more effectively than American economic aid.

THE TWO FINAL practical consequences of the Israeli upsetting of the status quo are by no means certainties, at this writing. But they are of

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great significance, even as possibilities. The action created an open situation, in which the search for solutions can be pursued. All will agree that the most burning problem of the Middle East is constituted by the Arab refugees in the Gaza enclave, a population deliberately kept there by Egypt until the day when the last Jew could be driven into the Mediterranean. Short of this "solution," only the Israeli conquest of Gaza makes it *possible* for the problem to be resolved. I am personally impressed by Richard Crossman's proposal for an administration by a U.N. High Commissioner for five years, set forth in the *New Statesman and Nation* (Jan. 12, 1957). Be that as it may, the important thing is that a genuine soluion is now conceivable. This ties in with my final point—re: practicality. The status quo ante—a festering sore—can no longer be restored. U.N. and great power action must take place. It is only *now* that Mr. Diamond's modest proposals for steps toward a solution of the Middle East problem (refugee resettlement, economic aid, and a military embargo enforced by U.N. inspection teams)—with which I am in agreement—can be taken, an unlikelihood prior to October.

Lastly, Mr. Diamond condemns the Israeli attack because it contained the risk of a third world war. Yet one page later, he writes "both Russia and America immediately exerted all possible pressure towards their [the hostilities'] cessation... the fact is that the war in the Near East was not permitted to spread..." There was such a risk, which, I hope, was not lightly dismissed by Israel. But I think that Mr. Diamond's suggestion that it was very slight is correct...

I repeat that no one claims that Israel's action solved any of the fundamental problems. I am, in particular, perturbed by the continuing failure—in part quite possibly Israel's fault—to find a way to the Arab masses. It troubles me that Israel's major ally is France, its hands bloodied in Africa. The Kafr Kassim curfew massacre—mitigating circumstances or not—was shocking. But there is little doubt in my mind that the Israeli action was essential to Israel's survival and, all things considered, is to be approved.

Stanley Diamond replies:

Some of Mr. Antonovsky's points are considered above. I should merely like to indicate what seems to be a contradiction in his statement. On the one hand, he talks of the "puncture of the self-imposed myth of Arab military might." On the other, he speaks of the Arab "military timetable," quoting a sketch from *Israel Speaks* of what would have happened if Israel had not attacked last October.

He also states that the decision of the Mapai Government to move blocked the rise to power of the "rightist Heruth party." One wonders what virtue a Social Democratic coalition possesses if it behaves in the fashion reactionary groups may be expected to. One might also say that the behavior of the Mollet Government in North Africa checked the development of French fascism. But at what cost?

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I do, however, agree with Mr. Antonovsky that the situation is fluid. The deed has been done, and the faster ameliorative action leading to a permanent settlement occurs, the better. That the Eisenhower Doctrine will improve matters, either to the best interests of Israel or the Arabs, seems, however, very doubtful indeed.

COMMUNICATION—II

On Relations Between Socialists and Communists

G. D. H. Cole

What attitude should democratic Socialists, who reject Communism and abhor the abuses of which Communist Governments have been guilty, take up towards Communist Parties and towards individual Communists in the light of recent developments in the Soviet Union and in the "party line" in other countries? The Editors of DISSENT have asked me to give their readers my views on these questions; and I am glad to do so, though I do not think they admit of simple or universal answers. For one thing, the situation differs quite widely from country to country. For me, an Englishman, it would be quite ridiculous to suggest that the Labor Party ought to come to any sort of agreement with a Communist Party that has no significant following and no claim to be taken seriously as a political party. But it does not follow from this that the French Socialist Party is right in taking the same line; for it is evident that in France there can be no real advance towards Socialism without the support of a great many persons who are at present members of, or vote for, the French Communist Party... Nor, again, does it follow that what is right for Great Britain, or for the Scandinavian countries, is right for India or Burma or for the Socialist Parties of the Arab world. It may be that in all these cases there are valid reasons against any alliance, or friendly dealings, between democratic Socialist Parties and Communist Parties; that is a matter I shall proceed to discuss. All I am saying at present is that, whereas the answer is obvious in the light of the British situation, it is much less obvious in countries where a large part of the working class at present follows the Communist lead.

It is less obvious because a high degree of working-class unity is a *sine qua non* for advancing towards Socialism and because, under such circumstances, a refusal to have anything to do with the Communist Parties is apt to throw the Socialist, even unwillingly, into alliance with anti-socialist and even with reactionary elements. I think the present position of the French Socialists illustrates this danger very clearly. The present French Government, under a Socialist Prime Minister and with Socialists holding the key

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offices in international affairs, is pursuing an utterly wrong policy in relation both to Algeria and to the Suez crisis, and is bringing the whole Socialist movement into the utmost discredit. I am not saying that the proper remedy is for the French Socialists to ally themselves with the Communist Party; for I see no good reason to suppose that such an alliance is practicable on satisfactory terms. But I am pointing out that the division in the French working-class movement condemns it to sterility as a force for Socialism, and at least threatens to condemn the French Socialist Party to a still worse fate.

All this may be admitted, and it may yet be held that the differences between Communism and democratic Socialism are so fundamental and unbridgeable that no sort of unity or mutual accommodation can be thought of as even possible. Many democratic Socialists, I am aware, do take this view; and, up to a point, I agree with them. I do not believe that any united action is possible between democratic Socialist and Communist Parties without much greater changes than seem yet to have occurred in Communist ideologies, except perhaps in Yugoslavia and possibly in Poland; and I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am not advocating, and have not advocated, for any country either a fusion of Socialist and Communist Parties or an alliance between them. I do, however, believe that a time may come when, in *some* countries, an alliance may be both feasible and desirable, though I can see no country in which it is either possible or desirable at present.

THE PROPOSAL I have been making for some time past is not for an alliance between parties, but for more and more free and open discussion between individuals across party frontiers. My personal experience and contacts, which have been fairly wide, simply do not bear out the view that, as far as individuals are concerned, a sharp dividing line can be drawn between democratic Socialist sheep and Communist wolves. I have Communist friends who have been quite as shocked as I have been by the revelations about what went on in the Soviet Union and the satellite countries during the Stalinist epoch and are now busily asking their consciences on what terms they can remain within their Communist Parties. They are reluctant to abandon these parties, unless they must, because they are deeply dissatisfied with the attitude of the democratic Socialist Parties, especially on such matters as colonialism and the "cold war" alliance with the United States, and because they feel a deep sympathy with the great struggle of the Russian and Chinese peoples to catch up with the techniques of the advanced countries and to improve their standards of living and culture. They recognise that *some* things have gone terribly wrong in the Soviet Union, but not that *everything has gone* wrong. They still believe that the Soviet Union and China, in their own ways, are engaged in building up Socialist societies, though they are much less sure than they used to be that the Soviet way is the best way for countries with widely different institutions and traditions. Most of them are ready to agree that the mere discarding of the "cult of personality" is not nearly enough to correct what is wrong in the Soviet Union, and are trying hard to think out what more needs to be done. When I talk to such Communists, though I may disagree with them on many important points, I find it quite

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impossible to regard them as enemies with whom, as a democratic Socialist, I have nothing in common. On the contrary, I have a great deal in common with them and hope, by continual converse, to narrow our disagreements still more, until we reach a point at which I and they can find common ground for an attempt to induce our several bodies of supporters to come nearer together.

The matters on which these, up to a point, repentant Communists and I chiefly disagree are very important. They relate to the theory and practice of dictatorship, to single-party rule, to the policy called "democratic centralism," and to the scant regard paid in the Soviet Union to the claims of economic or even social equality. I am against dictatorship in any country in which there exists any tradition of parliamentary government, and indeed in any country where it can possibly be avoided—as it cannot, I think, always be under conditions of actual civil war. I am against the rule of a single party, excluding the existence and effective activity of opposition parties—though here, again, under actual conditions of revolution and civil war it may be impossible to avoid the temporary suppression of clearly counter-revolutionary parties. (I think it was clearly wrong in the Russia of the years after 1917 to suppress either the Mensheviks or the Left Social Revolutionaries.) I am against what is called "democratic" centralism, because I think it means in practice a most undemocratic imposition of policies from the top, instead of the building up of them from below, and because it leads inevitably to bureaucratization and opens the door to tyranny by an individual or group that succeeds in making itself master of the party machine. Finally, I am against large disparities of income or social prestige, beyond what are necessary as incentives to work, because they inevitably result in something remarkably like a new structure of class-distinctions and stand right in the way of advance towards a really classless society.

If I am asked whether I see any sign that the Communist Parties, either in the Soviet Union or elsewhere, are now prepared to give up these disagreeable dogmas, the answer of course is "No." I do, however, believe that many individual Communists are becoming increasingly doubtful about all of them, and that it is well worth while to discuss them frankly without losing one's temper. This view rests of course on a belief that it is wrong to judge the achievements of the Soviet Union—or of China or other Communist countries—simply by what they have done amiss, without taking due account of their positive achievements. I have no wish to extenuate the appalling miscarriages of justice that have taken place under Stalinist rule or the extreme ruthlessness with which millions of innocent persons have been treated because they have been regarded as "class enemies." These are terrible enough, and are not to be fully explained by the legacy of pitiless oppression which most of the Communist States have inherited from an evil past. But, however strongly we condemn these practices, we need to set against them, not so much the vast advances that have been made in productive techniques as the immense cultural progress that has arisen out of mass

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education and the opening of social and economic opportunities to millions of persons to whom the displaced regimes of these countries offered no sort of chance of the good life. We are ready enough to take credit for achievements of this order in our own countries; and it is unreasonable to let ourselves be blinded to them in the Communist countries, because we disapprove of the political behaviour of their ruling parties. Nor is it reasonable, even if we see signs of the development of a much too unequal distribution of incomes in the Soviet Union, or even of the emergence of a new ruling class, to ignore the fact that similar "managerial" tendencies are strongly at work in our own societies, or that the Communist countries have at any rate got rid of a vast amount of obsolete feudal domination and of the dead hand of inherited income derived from private ownership. We have every right to insist that in our own societies, with their better traditions of democratic government and toleration, we will have nothing to do with practices that involve the destruction of these civilized values; but that does not carry with it a right to wipe out of consideration the positive achievements of men who had no such tradition to build upon and could certainly not be expected to carry through their own revolutions by means which require these traditions as a foundation for orderly change.

For these reasons, though I always detested Stalinism and regarded the entire Communist doctrine of one-party dictatorship as utterly inappropriate to Western conditions, I was never prepared to join in the great anti-Communist crusade. I was not prepared to do so, though I had personal experience of the impossibility of working in a friendly co-operative way with Communists who had no scruples about stabbing me in the back under party orders, and regarded the defense of the Soviet Union against its enemies as a sufficient excuse for any amount of lying (often, but not always, unconscious) and back-biting misrepresentation. Long ago, in the 1920s, I ceased to attempt to work with persons who behaved in this way. But I have to add that I have always known, and remained on friendly terms with, Communists who did not engage in such practices. Many of these dropped, or were thrust, out of the Communist Party because they refused to comply with its demands; but some remained, and remain, in it because they dislike even more the sectarian self-righteousness that so often characterizes the leadership of the democrat Socialist Parties and the alliance of many of these parties with the imperialist and colonialist tendencies of the so-called "democratic" West. With these Communists I find much common ground, as well as much to disagree about; and I believe this type of attitude to be much more frequent among rank-and-file Communists than among their leaders, who have hitherto been picked largely for their readiness to follow unquestioningly the official party line.

My proposal, then, is that rank-and-file Socialists who take their Socialism seriously and are prepared to think about its problems as objectively as they can should try to get together much more than they have done hitherto for the free discussion of fundamental Socialist issues, not as representatives of their Parties or of particular groups but as individuals...

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A Rejoinder by H. Brand

The importance of Mr. Cole's article lies not in his discussion of the relations which should exist between Socialists and Communists, but in his setting forth of the political basis of the discussion.* The attitude he proposes contains fundamental concessions to Communist dogma. This, it seems to me, makes any discussion of the *real* problems illusory.

Cole is motivated by the view that some form of rapprochement between Socialists and Communists is necessary in order to promote working class unity in the fight for Socialism. I will not here dispute this view in the abstract since what matters are the concrete political conditions of such a rapprochement.

These political conditions are defined as soon as a position on the character of the Russian and Chinese regimes has been taken. This does not merely entail the acceptance or rejection of these regimes but their analysis on either principled or empirical grounds. Analysis from principle involves an organic approach: Police terror and repression on the one hand and industrial progress on the other are *inseparable* constituent elements of Russian and Chinese society, they stamp its basic features. Empirical analysis attempts to balance incommensurable weights ("some things have gone terribly wrong but not everything has gone wrong"): but the "good" and the "bad" are not plus and minus sums, they are qualities forever disputing the moral realm. In regard to the Russian and Chinese regimes an empirically based position, by affirming what it regards as "good," necessarily leads to the acceptance of these regimes since they, after all, father the "good" as well as the "bad." But the analysis cannot stop at the ethical plane.

However, Cole's unprincipled approach to the question of the nature of these regimes has not led him quite that far. At this point he merely apologizes for them and their actions. He does so confusedly, but his lengthy prefatory reservations only serve to emphasize the *trend* of his argument. This trend is implicit in the emphasis he gives to the "positive achievements" of the two regimes. Of these achievements Cole rates "cultural progress" highest, neglecting to notice that the kinds of cultural progress he enumerates are concomitants of industrialization, not ends in themselves; and that these totalitarian regimes have used industrialization to enhance and strengthen the social and physical bases of their power. If the growth of industry has created conditions to which they seek to adjust "by liberalization," this is not to their credit; it is for them a question of how best to survive. They are not likely to liberalize themselves out of existence. If, in turn, there are strong "managerial tendencies" in *our* society, they exist in a framework of relatively free political and social institutions. In China and Russia "liberalizing" tendencies exist in the context of an oppressive managerial state.

While crediting the Russian and Chinese regimes with "cultural progress," Cole implicitly absolves them from responsibility for imposing their terror—

* See also page 157.—Ed.

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the former is a "positive achievement," the latter appears to be historically inescapable, even if "the legacy of pitiless opression... inherited from an evil past" cannot "fully" explain it. Then what does "fully" explain it? Again, this question can only be answered if one is willing to relate terror and "progress" in a totalitarian collectivist society. If one does not do this but ascribes the terror to "history" and the "progress" to "free will," as it were, one *evades* the issue, one *apologizes.*

LEST I BE REPROACHED for reading too much into Cole's communication, I refer to his "Reflections on Hungary" (*New Statesman and Nation,* Jan. 12th, 1957). After regretting the scarcity of "facts" available about this most widely and thoroughly reported of all revolutions, he comes up with some otherwise strangely neglected "facts": namely, that many reactionary and Fascist groups were about to take over the leadership of the Hungarian masses, that "civil war" threatened, that therefore Nagy was unable to consolidate his government and that—well, that perhaps the Russians had no choice but to intervene. Intervene to save Hungarian democracy? Cole doesn't say so, assures us that he thinks the Russians were "wrong"—but, by postulating a pattern of events which could only lead to "in effect Fascist rule," he makes Russian intervention, if not acceptable, at least palatable.

The Hungarian uprising posed great questions in starkly simple forms. There will and should be no end of discussion and search for the history, prospects and implications of this uprising. But its *meaning* cannot be in question. Cole sees the intervention by the Russians as facing socialists "with an appallingly difficult problem of judgment," i.e., a judgment as to whether the Russians did or did not act to prevent Fascism. But this is to accept—half-heartedly, but still accept—at face value the slanders by which the Communists have sought to whitewash Russian action in Hungary. The problem facing Socialists in Hungary is not one of "judgment," but one of the modes and possibilities of continued resistance to the Russian tyranny and its Hungarian agents. Cole's attitude towards the Hungarian events must serve as the touchstone of his attitude towards Communists generally; and as long as he takes the attitude that he does toward the Communists, there can be little profit in discussing with him the genuine problem of how socialists should respond to the crisis within the Communist world. Cole's readiness to apologize and to contrive a false pattern of events so as to be better able to apologize, must lead to unworthy compromises in the struggle against totalitarianism, to the surrender of the critical faculty and the betrayal of libertarian ideals.

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BOOKS

A Southern Conceit

SEGREGATION, THE INNER CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH, by Robert Penn Warren. Random House. $1.95.

The publisher's wrapper speaks of this little book as a "sympathetic, fair, and honest report." And so it is. Yet it is disingenuous and not disinterested, and it is a conceited little book. What it says sheds no light, but its way of saying it happens to be an excellent brief example of a kind of southern literary attitude, and it is worth discussing; especially since this attitude dovetails neatly into the conceit and disingenuousness (much closer to dishonesty) of *Life* magazine for which the reportage was made. Penn Warren's disingenuousness is this: he sees, he cannot help but see, that the Negro problem in the south is a psychiatric one, a matter of irrational emotions and split identity; all the usual reasons are largely rationalizations; and indeed he subtitles his book "inner conflict," a term picked up from psychoanalysis. Yet the author persists in striking the postures and sounding the rhetoric of being in an agonizing moral dilemma, as if a problem of medicine were a problem of ethics. This is a spurious seriousness, a confusion, as Aristotle would have said, between the tragic and the merely pathetic. To be sure, no one likes to be looked at as sick and "merely pathetic," and he puts it to himself otherwise, but that putting is conceit.

Let me ask the reader to imagine himself back to 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Law, and to compare that situation with our present one following the Supreme Court's decisions against segregation. In 1850, the Law, written in the Constitution itself and strongly affirmed by the Court, offended many a northern heart and soul; a century later, the Law, going the other way, offends many a southern heart and soul. The northerners nullified the law and ran their undergrounds; now the southerners are nullifying the law and have their mobs. In both cases, a direct clash between popular sentiment and law; and generally in such cases the law must finally give way. Yet there is a crucial difference between these two nullifications (and there is an unanimous informed opinion that the southern popular sentiment will give way, it will not make law).

In 1850 the man whose sentiment made him shelter the runaway and defy the law, felt himself fortified by all ethics, fairness, the golden rule, the spirit of the Constitution and the Declaration, Christian, deist, or transcendental metaphysics—all these were on the side of his sentiment; and if he would be punished for his lawless act,

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he would be judged as a decent man or a martyr, depending on his enthusiasm. But the southerner who cannot stomach the black boy in the school is precisely inwardly betrayed by most of these same ideals and conscientious considerations; he only feels he is in the right, he rather knows he is in the wrong; and it takes a lot of loud shouting and banding together to feel right enough to act in such a case. (It is the difference between a lynch mob and personal moral conviction.) That is, the stronger law and the better reason are on the one side; and on the other are only passions, and reasons of the blood, the gorge, and the jealous nightmare.

Now if such passions, opposed to the ideal and beginning to lose the sanction of conventional authority, nevertheless cannot be downed in a man and even break into overt action, then that man is going to be very sick. He is certainly an object of physicianly compassion (probably a more practical proposition than "a case for the police"). But he is not, as such, an object for tragic pity, for brooding with like Hamlet, or of whom to say, as this author does, that he has a "moral problem."

PENN WARREN understands perfectly that fundamentally we have to do with unassimilable and self-disintegrating sentiments. "The reality is the fact of self-division." Reporting his informal interviews and asking his question, "What are the reasons for segregation?" he collects a list of responses: "Pridefulness [here meaning, you gotta be better than somebody], money [for instance, wage differentials], level of intelligence, race [miscegenation], filth and disease, power, hate, contempt, legality." He himself lays a personal stress on one other factor, "piety," in the sense of sticking to grandfather's ways. But in the end, none of these seems to him to be the essential thing; rather, "the problem is to learn to live with ourselves... Desegregation will come when enough people in a particular place cannot live with themselves any more"; and he climaxes this passage with an excellent example of a person not able to live with herself: a crazy old lady who hears non-existent voices of Negroes screaming in the night, being burned alive.

This makes sense, a disordered personality, a psychiatric case. And I guess it is the feeling that people who are not sick in this particular way experience when we meet with people who are crazy in this way, whether in New York or in New Orleans. But what is remarkable now is that Penn Warren by no means goes on from this line of reasoning, to ask, for instance, the pertinent psychological questions, to ask for dreams and sexual fantasies, to notice the relevant character symptoms and obsessional defenses against anxiety, to explore (what is striking) the likeness of delusional jealousy. Quite the contrary! He suddenly takes a moral stance of exhortation to the good way. Does he really think that the crazy old lady of his image will be helped by that kind of talk? If he thinks so, he's a fool; if he means his image to be taken less earnestly, he's a lousier writer than he is.

Let me put it another way: If you examine the list of "reasons" quoted above, that the reporter is satisfied with having collected, you find that it is altogether blank with respect to the standard contemporary theory of Prej-

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udice (and certainly we are dealing with cases of prejudice). In the center of a standard analysis would be the notion of "reaction-formation": that the prejudice is a means of bolstering the repression of the inacceptable parts of oneself ("one's own ape-like nature," the southerner's wishful suspicion that he is a nigger); and the prejudice allows the consequent projections to alleviate tension, and spiteful aggressions to win small victories. Whatever the merits of this contemporary theory—it has great merits—it is simply the bread-and-butter of any attempt to describe the kind of behavior we read from Clinton, Tennessee; and all of the other reasons readily group themselves in such a theory, both as causes and effects. Surely a Pulitzer Prize winner has heard of such things. I have no novel information on this subject-matter and I do not intend to spin again these well-spun speculations; but I want simply to ask the question, how is it conceivable that this sophisticated author proceeds as if no such further avenues of analysis existed?

The question is an important one; for when, on the contrary, he pursues his analysis to the point of split identity and then suddenly jumps to ethics and justice—"one small episode in the long effort for justice"—then he does no good and some harm; he creates an impasse and bypasses the present. If it is an ethical problem (or *a fortiori* a political problem), one must address it with present indignation, determination, sacrificial love, enthusiasm, organization, or however one has the will and skill. None of this is in Penn Warren's little book. If it is a medical problem, one goes on to employ or indicate or at least suggest the not brilliant, but by no means empty armamentarium of social psychiatry. None of this is in Penn Warren's little book. But the effect of what he does—I do not think it is his intention—is to stall the works. This is to be disingenuous, for he must have both more live impulses and better sense. He seems to want to cry out "Help! help us!" but instead he stalks off (or drowns) in his dignity.

THIS BRINGS US BACK, I guess, to the conceit of a little southern book like this. By "conceit" let us here mean a fantastic concept of oneself that one clings to for fear of an intolerable feeling of emptiness or defeat if it is given up. In the present case there are two strands, the southern conceit, which is merely a bit trying (still fighting the Civil War), and the more virulent conceit of *Life* magazine, which is a pain in the ass.

If we consider the author's handling of his list of reported reasons, he seems to warm to two: the kind of false pride that says, "They can't push me around," without having an idea to give true courage in Socrate's sense; and especially piety, in the sense of loyalty to our history.

Now "history" is of course a big deal with southern writers ("he is a man of character and force... of fine intelligence... he reads Roman history"). But let us look at the following remark of Penn Warren's. He is describing a 15-year-old who has come to inspect an old fort in Nashville; the boy is portrayed as particularly attractive, appealing, and manly—until suddenly he shies away with ugly suspicious anger because the reporter doesn't share his hatred for nigger-bastards. The author remarks,

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"And somehow the hallowedness of the ground he stood on had vindicated, as it were, that hate." What the devil does that sentence mean? If he means to say that there is an intrinsic connection between the history and its present-day consequences, and the consequences are admittedly ugly and unfortunate, then how is the ground "hallowed"? Would it not be wiser sadly to reassess the history, rathen than to become pompous? Certainly the scene of any past epic or tragic event must evoke thought and even passionate concern and pride for ourselves if there is ground for pride; but it is not hallowed, not hallowed unless the outcome is holy.

I am reminded of the tone of say, C. G. Bowers' *The Tragic Era,* where he lauds the beauty and virtue and learning and mores of his *ante-bellum* heroes, and he deplores with anguished sentimentality the evil days that have come and the offended womanhood, but never does he ask whether the infatuations of the former did not produce the latter (as the infatuations of the north have produced their own catastrophes, but nobody would boast of it.) Penn Warren does not, of course, try to defend the southern culture, nor to suggest that there is any present culture to save; but he does tend to make past tragedies a bulwark of present conceit.

In the same vein, he dwells a lot on the reasons springing from a defense of regionalism—resistance to the centralized constitution and the sociologists. But for heaven's sake, he is writing for *Life* magazine! that organ of decentralized integral culture! A regionalism that defends its peculiar and unprofitable excellences is an honorable thing, and a regionalism that can make them exemplary and viable, is a wonderful thing; but a regionalism that is jealous of its *right* to segregate, is conceit, a defense against being swallowed up by one's stupid betters. Let me put it another way: in the present economy and culture, almost the only earmark of the South *as* a region is the segregation; and if that's the case, forget it and draw the line elsewhere.

FINALLY, I must, although it is boring, mention the specific conceit of style that is germane to writing for Luce publications. This occurs when there is an "objective" and "impartial" reporting of what cannot possibly be manfully confronted without indignation or grief or love or compassion or such. Then the resulting woeful emptiness is concealed by dramatizing the self-conceited reporter or photographer. There are tricks of rhythm and tricks of ordering.

For instance, the terse bang-bang isolated concluding sentence: "...A girl from Mississippi had said to me, etc. *Paragraph.* I know what she meant. *End of Section.*" "He asks me if I have been talking to a lot of people. *Paragraph.* I had been talking to a lot of people. *End of Section.*" "I had said it for a joke. *Paragraph.* But had I? *End of Section.*" "*Paragraph.* Or are we? *End of Section.*" (This is really too vulgar.)

An alternative ending is the irrelevant long-rhythmed picturesque fade-out, as: "*Paragraph.* I look down the interminable row of dingy houses, over the interminable flat of black earth toward the river. *End of Section.*" "*Paragraph.* It is late afternoon. I hear the pullulation of life, the stir and new tempo toward evening, the babble

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of voices, a snatch of laughter. I hear the remorseless juke boxes. They shake the air. *End of Section.*"

Or again, he makes use of the snap-to-attention italicized repetitions, punctuating a factitious on-and-on flow: "*What's coming?* 'Whatever it is,' the college student says... *What's coming?* And the Methodist minister ... *What's coming?* I ask the handsome, big ... *What's coming?* And the college student says ... *What's coming?* And a state-official says ... *What's coming?* And a man in Arkansas says ..." (The movies have much to answer for!)

There is no use in multiplying types and examples; any page of *Life* is a lead-mine for a prospector. Given these mannerisms it is obviously impossible to say a serious word; but my point is that the manner is not the cause but the result of the sterile attitude adopted. Like any other conceit, however, it does create a false security in the writer and publisher (and presumably in some readers) that something is going on.

More direct in method is the conceit of the "impartial reporter," given by impartially skipping from one immediate close-up to another. In this little report impartiality means that approximately equal space is given to white and black; the white close-ups and black close-ups are mixed as if at random; there are sympathetic specimens of each; and bad marks are scored against both.

Frankly, if desegregation is a matter of justice, as the author says on his next to the last page, I find it hard to understand what he thinks he is doing by this mode of scoring; is not impartiality the virtue of a referee in an equal competition with strict rules? But more generally, in this kind of reportage there is a confusion between impartiality and disinterestedness. Disinterestedness is nonattachment to one's particular interests and concentration on the truth of the case; it therefore often eventuates in a passionate advocacy of a new something. Of this beautiful intellectual virtue there is very little in *Life* magazine and not much in Penn Warren's *Segregation.* "Impartial reporting" of the kind here is a conceited attitude to protect the writer and reader from experience, and to substitute conversation-pieces.

PAUL GOODMAN

UNITY AND VARIETY IN MUSLIM CIVILIZATION, edited by Gustave E. von Grunebaum, University of Chicago Press, 1955. 384 pp. $6.00.—With the Muslim world in a state of social convulsion as it seeks to adjust to the twentieth century, the western world seems at a loss to understand exactly what is happening in this vast area reaching from Morocco to Indonesia and having some 350,000,000 inhabitants. Observing and analyzing these developments in conventional western terms of analysis do not help very much in bringing one closer to an understanding of the deep-rooted problems of this Muslim world with its different values and social goals. More helpful in this direction is a probing into the underlying aspects of Muslim civilization—its culture; its unifying and divisive forces, its concept of law, its traditions; its reaction to the impact of western civilization. These and, any other aspects of Muslim civilization are treated in this very timely and timeless volume in the University of Chicago's Comparative Studies of Cultures and Civilizations. The collection of essays that make up this volume do not fall into the categories of the superficial, glib, trivial, nor are they the highly impressionistic and usually uninformed results of a quick tour of a foreign area. On the contrary, they are thoughtful, often erudite and always penetrating analyses by scholars. S.P.

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LETTERS

Fresh Leads

Editors:

Having digested the current issue of DISSENT in the comparative isolation of Puerto Rico, I am moved to sum up impressions on the publication's relevance in the last two years. A lot of theoretical debris has been cleared away. Issues have been sharply delineated. Possibly the finest single group of thinkers on the Anglo-American left have enabled us to know where we are, conceptually, at this stage of the power struggle.

But has this been enough? Admittedly, for certain categories of readers it has. It is hard to imagine the alert white-collar reader in our Northern and Western cities and suburbs not being satisfied with your performance. Yet, what has been the effect on the relatively few who are just becoming aware of society's problems—the iconoclastic college student, the Southern Negro intellectual, the Southern youth, white and black, just beginning to seek a living, the young colonial in Puerto Rico, Okinawa or Hawaii? These last will hardly be satiated on fare which limits itself to exposing the callousness of the Stalinists, the crocodile tears of the Krushchevites or the complacency of Main Street. Life is still ahead for them. They feel the challenge to remake society . . .

In the South of this country a deadly battle is just being joined. The anonymous Negro at the bottom ol the social structure is beginning to make his first tentative efforts to come to grips with his fate. All of us know that he will be thrown back into a cruel helotry unless the white working-class, particularly in the South, comes to the timely realization that it must ally itself with this new rebel. But there is no real effort to encourage an awakening of this consciousness. To applaud Montgomery does not suffice. Because of the unmorality of the Communists in the last three decades, we have become solely preoccupied with means. But admirable as our techniques may be, if they do not achieve the goal desired, they inexorably spell defeat.

Walter Reuther calls, rightly, for international working-class action to boycott the U.S.S.R. over Hungary. But neither he nor the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions call for any working-class action against Britain and France over the invasion of Egypt, or against the United States for the brutal despoilment of Okinawa. Once again this circumstance demonstrates that leadership of organized labor implicitly supports the continued domination of the colonial peoples by the "free" imperialisms. There is a difference between their support, freely given, and the support of the Soviet Labor Front, which is openly government-manipulated. But do you think that difference should make Reuther's position acceptable to the Asian and African masses?

These questions are asked because I believe you have accepted the necessity to give critical support to the "Free World" in the current struggle, and feel that any attempt to formulate a program to remake both systems is doomed to failure. You may be right, but a look at the colonial and semi-colonial regions might convince you that your resignation is not shared there. Probably we must look to these areas for fresh leads.

Pomona, N. Y. CONRAD LYNN

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